ÖSTERREICHISCHE AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
PHILOSOPHISCH-HISTORISCHE KLASSE
SITZUNGSBERICHTE, 615. BAND

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Enlightenment by a Single Means

TIBETAN CONTROVERSIES ON THE "SELF-SUFFICIENT WHITE REMEDY" *(DKAR PO CHIG THUB)*

VERLAG
DER ÖSTERREICHISCHEN AKADEMIE DER WISSENSCHAFTEN
WIEN 1994

Vorgelegt von w. M. ERNST STEINKELLNER in der Sitzung am 17. November 1993

Gedruckt mit Unterstützung
durch den Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung

Illustration on front cover:
Drawing of the Indian siddha Koṭali (Tib.: Tog-tse-pa) "The Mattock-man".

ISBN 3-7001-2162-8

Druck: Ferdinand Berger & Söhne Ges.m.b.H., 3580 Horn

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of Tibetan Buddhism, the metaphor of the *dkar po chig thub* has generated a surprising amount of controversy. In the 12th and 13th centuries it triggered serious doctrinal discussions, and in the subsequent centuries the inter-sectarian controversies that it occasioned took a long time to die down. The Tibetan expression *dkar po chig thub*, however, would seem to be innocuous enough. It can be translated as "singly efficacious white [remedy]" or "self-sufficient white [simple]," and it was derived from Tibetan medical or pharmacological terminology—the phrase originally signifying literally a white (*dkar po*) herbal drug or simple that by itself alone (*chig*) was capable (*thub*) of effecting the cure.[1] But it was as a doctrinal metaphor that these words provoked disagreement, for any religious doctrine or practice characterized by this metaphor of self-sufficiency was implicitly said by its proponents to be capable of bringing about by itself alone the complete spiritual cure: perfect Awakening or Buddhahood.

The Tibetan school best known for using this metaphor was the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud. The expression *dkar po chig thub* is found in the writings of its founder, rJe sGam-po-pa (1079-1153), as well as in those of bla-ma Zhang Tshal-pa (1123-1193), an influential disciple of sGam-po-pa's nephew sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po (1116-1169). The corresponding doctrinal notion of a soteriologically self-sufficient teaching or factor was viewed with strong disapproval by some other Tibetan religious scholars already in the time of bla-ma Zhang. Its best-known critic, however, was the later scholar Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan (1182-1251), who referred to it and rejected it in several different

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[1] See S. Karmay (1988), p. 197f; D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 100f; and D. Jackson (1990), pp. 26f and p. 73, n. 20. I use the word *simple* as a noun in the sense of "a medicine of one constituent, a medicinal herb." In *Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged*, Second Edition (Cleveland & New York: 1971), the second definition for *simple* as a noun is: "a medicinal herb or medicine obtained from a herb: so called because each vegetable was supposed to possess its particular virtue and therefore to constitute a simple remedy." The medical meanings of this word are sometimes considered archaisms.

works including two of his major doctrinal treatises, the *sDom gsum rab dbye* ("Discrimination of the Three Vows") and the *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal* ("Elucidation of the Sage's Intention").

Some aspects of this later Tibetan controversy and its background have already been discussed in recent studies.[2] Nevertheless, the relevant passages from sGam-po-pa, Zhang and Sa-skya Paṇḍita's writings have not yet been systematically gathered together and translated. I would therefore like to present below a translation of all known passages from these masters' writings that mention the *dkar po chig thub* metaphor directly. And since the historical and doctrinal contexts of these discussions in Tibet have also not been investigated in any detail until now, I would like to begin by explaining more about those three masters, their careers as teachers, and their doctrines connected with the *dkar po chig thub* metaphor.

One of the special Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po: mahāmudrā*) teachings for which sGam-po-pa was best known was his so-called "introduction to the [nature of] mind" (*sems kyi ngo sprod*), by which the disciple was led to confront and directly recognize the nature of his or her mind. sGam-po-pa is said to have given such Great Seal instructions sometimes not as secret Vajrayāna precepts in connection with initiation and special yogic practices, but rather as a Sūtra-based Great Seal instruction, or even as a doctrine going beyond both Sūtra and Tantra. Later critics such as Sa-skya Paṇḍita (or Sa-paṇ, as he was known for short) maintained, however, that all true Great Seal instructions were Mantrayāna teachings that necessitated full, formal Tantric initiation into a maṇḍala. These masters denied in general the existence of any Sūtra-based or non-Tantric Great Seal, and in particular they considered the

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[2] See especially D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 100ff, *et passim*. Other studies include Roger Jackson (1982); Leonard van der Kuijp (1983), pp. 102 and 304, n. 302-3; (1984), p. 155, n. 6; and (1986); Michael Broido (1987); and S. Karmay (1988), pp. 197-200. The first brief discussion of the *dKar po chig thub* controversy in Western scholarship was given by R. A. Stein (1971). For its English translation, see: R. A. Stein (1987), p. 58, n. 15. Another study that is useful for understanding the background of the discussion is the unpublished Ph.D. dissertation of Jared Douglas Rhoton, "A Study of the *sDom-gsum* of Sapan," (Columbia University, 1985).

I have already touched on many of the same topics and sources in the article D. Jackson (1990), though there I approached the subject from a different point of departure. I have also investigated several related themes in the paper: "Birds in the Egg and Newborn Lion Cubs: Metaphors for the Potentialities and Limitations of 'All-at-once' Enlightenment," which appeared in the proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on Tibetan Studies (Narita: 1992).

existence of any Mahāyāna doctrine outside of the classes of Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna to be impossible. Sa-paṇ himself also within the context of the general Mahāyāna criticized the notion that any one teaching or single spiritual factor could claim to be self-sufficient, including any meditative stoppage of conceptual processes in the name of "seeing the nature of mind." What especially infuriated the bKa'-brgyud-pa opponents of Sa-paṇ was that he went on to deny in his writings that the doctrine in question originated with the Indian adept Nāropa, but asserted rather that it was in fact the teaching of the Chinese master Mo-ho-yen, which according to long-standing Tibetan tradition had been refuted by the Indian paṇḍita Kamalaśīla at the bSam-yas debate.

The historical bSam-yas debate—which probably took place in some fashion in Central Tibet during the reign of the great Tibetan king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan (d. 790s)—together with the Chinese and Tibetan sources on it, has recently inspired a large amount of modern scholarship, and here is not the place to survey it all.[3] Nevertheless, it has become clear that the doctrines at issue at the original debate were not quite as simple or clear-cut as some later Tibetan restatements of them—including the historical summaries by Sa-paṇ and the sources he based himself on—would have us believe. Still, the accounts upon which Sa-paṇ and others based themselves were not mere fabrications, either. They seem in fact to go back to sources that include a version of the *sBa bzhed* history,[4] and similar traditions were familiar to Tibetan scholars before Sa-paṇ such as Nyang-ral Nyi-ma'i-'od-zer (1124-1192 or 1136-1204) and Lha-'bri-sgang-pa (fl. late 12th c.).[5] Moreover, one crucial Chinese source

[3] See, for instance, the sources listed by D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 65 and notes 127 and 128.

[4] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 70.

[5] On the history of Nyang Nyi-ma-'od-zer, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 74ff, and L. van der Kuijp (1986), p. 148f. For the relevant texts of both 12th-century sources, see also H. Eimer (1991), pp. 168-172. Lha-'bri-sgang-pa learned this tradition from Jo-bo Se-btsun, who was connected with Atiśa's three main disciples; this may therefore represent a mainstream bKa'-gdams-pa tradition. Lha-'bri-sgang-pa characterizes the Chinese master Mo-ho-yen as having advocated the cultivation of *prajñā* at the expense of the other perfections, using the metaphor of the soaring king of birds and the person who reaches the peak of the king of mountains. Kamalaśīla is said to have criticized these metaphors, saying that a bird flies by beating his wings stroke by stroke, and that one reaches the top of the highest mountain by taking one step after another. Just so, the understanding of Emptiness by a person of highest capacity also arises from having cultivated compassionate means.

recovered from Tun-huang agrees with such sources in mentioning that Mo-ho-yen used a panacea or single self-sufficient medicine metaphor for his instantaneous, non-conceptualizing method.[6] Doctrinally, too, the points at issue in the original bSam-yas debate did have some strong parallels with the later Tibetan *dkar po chig thub* controversies.[7] The main Indian paṇḍita at the debate, Kamalaśīla, was evidently attempting to refute the claim of soteriological self-sufficiency for a single method, and this was at the heart of the controversy addressed by his closely related *Bhāvanākrama* treatises and not for instance "subitism."[8] This

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[6] See P. Demiéville (1952), pp. 122f, who quotes Wang Hsi's *Cheng-li chüeh*. Here Mo-ho-yen responds to the question of whether more than one "medicines" are or are not necessary to remove separately the three distinct "poisons", i.e. kleśas. The translation of the question concludes:

> S'il en est ainsi, comment donc voulez-vous extirper les passions en cultivant l'abstention des notions de l'esprit? Les rendre temporairement invisibles, ce n'est pas un moyen de les extirper radicalement.

[Mo-ho-yen's reply begins:]

> D'après le *Nirvāṇa-sūtra*, il y a un médicament, nommé *agada*, qui guérit de toute maladie les êtres auxquelles il est administré. Il en est de [p. 123] même du sans-réflexion et du sans-examen.

See also L. Gómez (1983), p. 92, quoting the same passage from the *Cheng-li chüeh* of Wang Hsi, p. 146b:

> According to the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*, there is a certain medicinal herb that will cure all diseases in those who take it. It is the same with this absence of reflection and inspection.

This passage had been available in English translation since the appearance of E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures* (London: 1959), p. 217.

[7] Some traditional Tibetan histories, including Nyang-ral's *Chos 'byung* and the "alternative tradition" of the *sBa bzhed*, indeed attribute the use of the *dkar po chig thub* image to the Chinese side of the debate, who are said to have employed it to refer to their own special teaching. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 100.

[8] In the *cig car ba* manual recovered in Tun Huang (Pelliot Tib. 116) entitled the *dMyigs su med pa tshul gcig pa'i gzhung*, the very first objection ("adduced by those who since beginningless time have been attached to entities and language") answered is that one cannot awaken to perfect Buddhahood by cultivating the equipment of Gnosis alone: *ye shes kyi tshogs gcig po bsgom pas// bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub du sangs myi rgya bas/*. On this work see L. Gómez (1987), pp. 96 and 153, n. 123. And in the Bhāvanākramas (Peking vol. 102, *dbu ma a*), from the very first Kamalaśīla addressed this same point, stressing that other factors—compassion, Bodhicitta and skillful means—must by all means be cultivated. More than once (ff. 56b and 73a.6) he denies specifically that insight into Emptiness alone will suffice: *stong pa nyid 'ba' zhig ma yin no//*. E. Obermiller suggested already in 1935 the relevance of the third Bhāvanākrama to the debate. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 63-4, and note 121. On Kamalaśīla's criticism of an isolated "emptiness principle," see *ibid.*, pp. 184 and 190.

would accord with the general thrust of Sa-paṇ's critique of a self-sufficient or singly efficacious method.

As one modern scholar has put it:

> The question is not whether enlightenment is sudden or gradual, but rather whether the different elements of the path should be analyzed, defined and practiced separately. [If Kamalaśīla is right,] ... it is obvious that *upāya*, the altruistic aspect of Buddhahood, is not merely an automatic fruit of understanding or enlightenment, and that it should be practiced separately.[9]

This also agrees rather closely with the understandings of the later Sa-skya-pa learned tradition as represented by Go-rams-pa (1429-1489), who summarized the main thrust of the *dkar po chig thub* controversy similarly in his general exposition of Madhyamaka, the *dBu ma'i spyi don*:[10]

> The 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy],' which maintains that one can achieve omniscience by meditatively cultivating [insight into] Emptiness alone, has been refuted through numerous reasonings and scriptures by those who see reality without error—such as the great scholar Kamalaśīla and the glorious Sa-skya Paṇḍita—who said that you cannot achieve perfect Buddhahood without bringing to completion the aspect of [compassionate, skillful] means.

To the masters of the so-called "simultaneist" (*cig car ba*) traditions, however, this was all a fractious tempest in a single, capacious teapot. If a person possesses the insight into Emptiness, they asserted, there is not a single thing that is not included within this factor.[11] The path to liberation, consisting of the Six Perfections, is also completely present in

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[9] L. Gómez (1983a), p. 424. See also L. Gómez (1987), p. 97f, where the focus of the debate is summarized. For a synopsis of Kamalaśīla's three *Bhāvanākrama* treatises, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1981), pp. 96-99.

[10] Go-rams-pa, *rGyal ba thams cad kyi thugs kyi dgongs pa zab mo dbu ma'i de kho na nyid spyi'i ngag gis ston pa nges don rab gsal*, vol. 12, *ca* 173a.1: *dkar po chig thub ces bya ba stong nyid kho nar bsgoms pas thams cad mkhyen pa sgrub par 'dod pa la ni mkhas pa ka ma la shī la dang/ dpal ldan sa skya paṇḍita la sogs pa don ma 'khrul par gzigs pa rnams kyis thabs kyi cha ma tshang bas rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas sgrub par mi nus so// zhes lung dang rigs pa du ma'i sgo nas sun phyung zin pas 'dir 'bad pa ma byas so//.*

[11] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 265.6 (133a): *de lta bu'i stong pa nyid kyi don dang ldan na/ chos 'di la ma 'dus pa cig kyang med do//.* See also H. V. Guenther (1971), p. 220.

this very thing, for as the Sūtra of the Vajra Concentration (*rDo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo: Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*) states: "If you do not waver from Emptiness, this includes the six Perfections."[12] If you dwell within the insight into the ultimate—Emptiness—for even a single moment, this is immeasurably more meritorious than studying, reciting texts, or performing such meritorious deeds as practicing generosity.[13] Opponents may well ask: "If all those excellent virtues and merits are really included within cultivating simply the nature [of mind] or 'Mind Itself' (*sems nyid*), then why did the Buddha teach so many times the stages of skillful means?" The answer is: He taught them in order to guide people of inferior capacities who cannot understand ultimate reality.[14]

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My treatment of these topics in the following pages is an outgrowth of a wider investigation into the life and thought of Sa-skya Paṇḍita that I have been pursuing over the last few years. Here I have tried to establish Sa-paṇ's understandings on these subjects and to ascertain what was at issue when he criticized his doctrinal opponents in these connections. I have also tried to investigate the opposing doctrines in their original writings, to see to what extent Sa-paṇ's characterizations of their positions were accurate or appropriate. I have not, however, succeeded in presenting the Great Seal masters or their teachings with anything like their original striking power and appeal. The soaring, utterly non-worldly viewpoint from which these masters often spoke is difficult to reduce to a doctrinal system. The Great Seal and similar teachings by their nature do

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[12] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 267.5 (134a): *lam pha rol tu phyin pa drug kyang 'di nyid la tshang ste/ rdo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo las/ stong pa nyid la[s] ma g.yos na// pha rol phyin pa drug 'dus so// zhes gsungs so//*. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), pp. 221-22.

[13] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 264.2 (132b): *de ltar don dam shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa de'i ngang la dar cig tsam gnas na bskal pa'i bar du nyan pa'am/ klog pa'am dge ba'i rtsa ba sbyin pa la sogs pa byas pa bas bsod nams dpag tu med pa che ba yin no//*. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), p. 219.

[14] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 270.1 (135a): *'o na ngo bo'am sems nyid gcig pu bsgom pa la de dag thams cad 'dus na/ thabs kyi rim pa mang du gsungs pa dag 'byung ba ci ltar yin zhe na/ gnas lugs la rmongs pa'i skal pa dman pa rnams khrid pa'i phyir te/....* See also H. V. Guenther (1971), p. 224. Cf. L. Gómez (1987), p. 113, who has studied the remarks of Mo-ho-yen that skillful methods were taught for those of dull faculties.

not lend themselves easily to discursive description and historical analyses of the sorts I have attempted.[15] Moreover, the traditions themselves insist that these are secret insights which are only conveyable directly—without words or thoughts—by an accomplished master to a qualified disciple.

The Tibetan Great Seal and similar traditions did, however, compose their own written manuals. Such manuals and other doctrinal and historical writings have therefore been the main sources for my depictions of the traditions. Nowadays a number of publications devoted specifically to the Great Seal and the Great Perfection traditions are beginning to appear, including a few translations. I will therefore leave it to people with more insight to point out where my word- and concept-bound analyses have missed the mark!

When quoting from the original writings of sGam-po-pa (and for some of bla-ma Zhang's works, too), I have mainly given the text as it stands. I have not attempted to "correct" the spellings of the published manuscripts I used (which presumably derive ultimately from 12th-century originals) or to bring the text in line with more recent conventions, except where the sense might otherwise be completely unclear. Studies on the early Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa will become much easier when careful editions become available.

The present study on these topics was made possible in part by the Alexander von Humboldt-Stiftung, a research fellowship from which enabled me to begin the relevant research while at Hamburg University in 1988-89. I am also obliged to Prof. D. Seyfort Ruegg for his helpful comments in 1989, when I presented some of the translated passages from Sa-paṇ's works in a seminar at Hamburg University's Institute for the Culture and History of India and Tibet, and also for his later remarks. I could do some further work while on a fellowship from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science while at Kyoto University in 1990-91. Finally I revised and completed the main body of this study in 1991-2 while working at the Institute for the Culture und Intellectual History of Asia of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna. I am thankful to Mr. H. Lasic for proofreading the Tibetan texts by Sa-paṇ presented in the appendix and for much help in compiling the indexes. I am also indebted to Prof. John Clayton, Prof. Lambert Schmithausen, Mr. Burkhard Quessel and Dr. Dan Martin for reading this work and offering numerous valuable

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[15] L. Gómez (1987), p. 114, has expressed the predicament well: "...The subitists' fixation with making statements from the point of view of absolute truth is inherently disconcerting to anyone seeking doctrinal orientation."

comments. I would like to thank Mr. Burkhard Quessel once again for much help in preparing the final camera-ready copy for publication.

The main task I have undertaken here has been historical. I hope that by my gathering and interpreting these sources, interested readers will be able better to understand a few aspects of the difficult and subtle doctrinal problems faced by Tibetan Buddhists in the 12th and 13th centuries. The Tibetan Buddhist traditions concerned have almost all survived down to the present day (only bla-ma Zhang's tradition has died out, at least as an institutional entity). This means that to some extent the issues, too, live on and are not of purely historical interest. In fact, some of my findings may now and then touch a sensitive nerve of the traditions concerned or seem to verge on the controversial. This is not always easy to avoid when one presents in detail the contents of a controversy! But I should stress that the present study is merely one person's attempt at historical exploration and investigation, and it is by no means the last word. I therefore look forward to the comments of those who come to the subject from other viewpoints.

D. Jackson Hamburg, August 1993

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SGAM-PO-PA, SEEING THE MIND, AND THE WHITE SELF-SUFFICIENT REMEDY

Some of the doctrinal roots of the later Tibetan *dkar po chig thub* controversy lay in the revolutionary reclassifying and synthesizing work of the mature rJe sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen (1079-1153), founder of the Dwags-po bka'-brgyud tradition within the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud.[16] sGam-po-pa originally had been trained as a physician (*lha rje*) and had begun his adult life as a married layman. Indeed, he entered into intensive religious practice only after experiencing the shock of his young and beloved wife's sudden death, which had occurred when he was still in his early twenties (ca. 1100). He became one of the foremost disciples of rje-btsun Mi-la ras-pa (1040-1123), but only after extensive studies in other traditions. Before meeting Mi-la, he had already undergone full monastic ordination at the age of twenty-five (1104) and had sought out Tantric initiations in Lower Dags-po from the master Mar-yul Blo-ldan. He had also studied intensively in 'Phan-yul under masters of the bKa'-gdams-pa tradition such as Bya-yul-ba, sNyug-rum-pa and lCags-ri Gong-kha-pa. He met Mi-la ras-pa only later, and finally received instructions from him (especially on "inner heat" *gtum mo*) for thirteen months in 1110-11. Only then, after meditating for an additional three years, did sGam-po-pa attain Awakening. He tried to return to see his master Mi-la twelve years later in 1123, but Mi-la had already passed away. He continued a primarily contemplative life for some years, but then later in the 1220s he began his teaching career, which became more and more illustrious with the passing years. In 1126, he met his nephew sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po, and in 1132, when the latter was sixteen, he had him ordained and instructed

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[16] The following sketch of sGam-po-pa's life is based mainly on the *Blue Annals* (*Deb ther sngon po*) of 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *nya* 21b-26a; G. Roerich, transl. (1976), pp. 451-462. For some information on sGam-po-pa's life, see H. V. Guenther (1955), pp. 90-96, and Guenther (1971), pp. xi-xii.

him. In 1150 at the age of seventy-one, sGam-po-pa handed over the leadership of his monastic community to that same nephew.

In his maturity, rJe sGam-po-pa exhibited a penetrating, reappraising genius in the realm of doctrinal formulations, and when it came to method, here, too, he was not afraid to reevaluate, adapt or innovate. Like all skillful teachers, he compassionately tailored his instructions to the needs and abilities of his specific students—a fact that probably accounts for many of the seeming inconsistencies or differences of approach in his writings.[17]

In the later part of his life, he gave increasing attention to transmitting directly the highest Great Seal insight, perhaps in part also as an outgrowth of his own deepened and intensified spiritual insight. What was somewhat revolutionary about the approach sGam-po-pa adopted was that he sought ways to transmit this insight outside of the traditional Mantrayāna method, which treated it as an ultimate and highly secret "fruit" instruction to be conveyed only after full, formal tantric initiation and in connection with special yogic practices. Certain historians or scholars in the bKa-brgyud tradition portrayed sGam-po-pa's Great Seal teaching method as having been in this way a significant innovation within their lineage. The bKa'-brgyud-pa historian 'Gos lo-tsā-ba (1392-1481), for instance, stated:[18]

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[17] It should also be pointed out that many of sGam-po-pa's "writings"—including the collections of replies to students—were probably never corrected or arranged by him. They are groups of replies to questions given at various times and in various contexts, apparently surviving from the notes or memories of the students, and later thrown together in a fairly random order. This probably accounts in part for the situation described by M. Broido (1985), p. 13: "In this [*Phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan*] and in the similar *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan* nothing seems to have been further from sGam-po-pa's mind than propagating a single unified theory about something." In his formal treatises such as the famous *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*, however, he was setting forth a unified system.

The uneven quality of the collected writings of the early Dwags-po bka'-brgyud-pa masters and the presence of later interpolations within them were noticed for instance by lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, p. 459.1 (*cha kha* 20b): *'on kyang 'di dag gi bka' 'bum rnams su slob ma mkhas pa dang mi mkhas pa du mas zin bris nyag nyog mang po bcug 'dug pa la yid brtan mi snang ngo/ /.*

[18] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, p. 400 (*nya* 25b); G. Roerich, transl., pp. 459-60. See also sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, p. 271.7: *yid ma ches na byin brlabs mi 'byung/ yid ches pa cig la chos mang po mi dgos/ chos re re kha yar la rten nas bsgom pa yin.* "If you do not believe, [the master's] blessing will not occur. One who trusts does not need many religious teachings. One meditates based on individual, separate teachings."

> Concerning that [teaching of the Great Seal], rJe-btsun Mid-la had not given the Path of Means (*thabs lam*) and Great Seal [instructions] separately from one another. But [sGam-po-pa] taught the instructions on the Path of Means to those who were suitable recipients of the Mantra teachings, and he gave instructions on the Great Seal to those who were suitable as recipients of the Perfection-Vehicle (Pāramitāyāna) teachings, even though they had not received tantric initiation. He composed then a step-by-step manual of practical instruction called the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor*, which became popularly known also as "Dags-po's Realization Teaching" (*dags po'i rtogs chos*).[19] He taught that although the scriptures mention many essential qualities of teacher and student, a student need not have many qualities; it is enough if he just has devotion. He quickly produced a realization of the Great Seal even in the minds of some unintelligent, poverty-stricken or evil persons. He also composed a treatise on the stages of doctrine of the bKa'-gdams tradition,[20] while teaching many practical instructions too. Therefore it was famed that from this time the two rivers of bKa'-gdams-pa and Great Seal became blended.

The 16th-century master sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1513-1596?) similarly explained:[21]

> Though in the practice-lineage down to the great Reverend [Mi-la] they mainly cultivated in meditation the instructions of the Mantrayāna and taught the practical instructions on the Great Seal appropriately at the times of [instructions on] Inner Heat (*gtum mo*) and Luminous

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[19] The *Lhan cig skyes sbyor* is an instruction which on several levels applied (*sbyor*) Emptiness as innately and simultaneously arisen (*lhan cig skyes*). See sGam-po-pa's Collected Writings, vol. 1, p. 219-224, which is identified as this work by S. Karmay (1988), p. 144, n. 39. It is explicitly said to be a high Tantric instruction.

[20] Evidently this refers to his famous *bstan rim* treatise, the *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*.

[21] bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, sGam-po spyan-snga, p. 216 (108b): *'on kyang rje btsun chen po yan gyi sgrub brgyud la gsang sngags kyi man ngag rnams gtso bor sgom zhing/ gtum mo dang 'od gsal la sogs pa'i skabs ci rigs su phyag rgya chen po'i gdams pa ston par mdzad pa las/ rje sgam po pa de tshad med pa'i thugs rjes kun nas bslang ste/ gdul bya mchog dman thams cad kyis rtogs sla ba'i ched du/ snying po don gyi gdams pa phyag rgya chen po 'di nyid rtsal du phyung ste bstan pas shin tu 'phel zhing rgyas pa dang/ skal pa can thams cad kyis bgrod pa gcig pa'i lam du gyur pa yin no//*. Cf. the English translation by L. Lhalungpa, p. 119.

> Awareness (*'od gsal*), nevertheless the Lord sGam-po-pa, motivated by unlimited compassion, singled out and brought to the fore this instruction of the Essential Sense, the Great Seal, in order that all disciples—superior and inferior—could easily realize [it]. And by so teaching it, [this instruction] increased very much and became widespread, and it became the sole path used by all people of fortunate endowments.

Later in his life, sGam-po-pa stressed more and more to his students the simple, direct insight into the nature of mind, and he preferred to teach them just that. Other spiritual attainments such as learning in the scriptures and purity in monastic discipline were unimportant if they were not accompanied by the crucial liberating insight. As he said: "Without the insight into the nature of mind, one will not attain the awakening of Buddhahood. As for me, I value the realization of the nature of mind as better than excellent meditation."[22] Elsewhere he is recorded to have said:[23]

> If one understands the nature of the mind of the individual to be not established as anything at all, there is nothing higher than to place the mind concentrated in that. If a slight conceptual thought occurs, it doesn't hurt. Having looked right at it, return back hither. There is nothing better than the nature of mind which is nothing...."

The 16th-century historian dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, for instance, described this emphasis of sGam-po-pa's in the following way:[24]

> In the latter part of his life, he made his main instruction just the

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[22] sGam-po-pa, Collected Writings, vol. 1, p. 453: *rang gi sems ma rtogs na sangs mi rgyal nga ni bsgom bzang ba bas kyang sems rtogs pa la rtsis che gsung/.*

[23] sGam-po-pa, Collected Writings, vol. 111.7: *gang zag gi sems kyi ngo bo cir yang ma grub par shes na// de'i ngang* [112] *la bzhag pa de las lhag pa ci yang med de/ rnam par rtog pa phra mo byung yang mi [s]tol/ de rang la bltas pas tshur log nas 'ongs/ sems kyi ngo bo ci yang ma yin pa las lhag pa gang yang med de/....*

[24] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 799f.: *sku tshe smad la sems* [800] *kyi ngo bo ston pa phyag rgya chen po chig chod kho na gtso bor mdzad de/.*

> pointing out of the nature of mind, i.e. the "[singly and] instantaneously decisive" (*chig chod*) Great Seal.[25]

Some other masters of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud likewise specified that this direct pointing out or seeing of the nature of mind was sGam-po-pa's specialty, and that this was his *dkar po chig thub* that later scholars such as Sa-paṇ criticized. The 13th-century 'Bri-gung-pa commentator rDo-rje-shes-rab, for instance, stated in his *dGongs gcig* commentary:[26]

> The Lord sGam-po-pa, using an example from medicine said: "This 'seeing of the nature of mind' of mine is called the 'self-sufficient white [remedy].'"

Bla-ma Zhang (Zhang g.Yu-brag-pa brTson-'grus-grags-pa, 1123-1193), too, indirectly alluded to the important role of the "pointing out" or "introduction to" (*ngo sprod*) in sGam-po-pa's method by characterizing the Dags-po system as "The introduction to the Great Seal in the tradition of Dags-po-ba," contrasting it with the other lineages of the Great Seal Instructions (*phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag*).[27] A little later (p. 557.4), he characterized it as "the pointing out of 'original mind,' Dags-po's making it seen in its naked [essence]" (*gnyug ma'i ngo sprod dags pos gcer mthong byed).*

That sGam-po-pa had laid a special emphasis on the direct introduction to mind was stressed even more strongly by sGam-po-pa's "grand-pupil" 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po. The latter stated once that from among the many Indian mahāsiddhas, Tog-rtse-pa ("Mattock-man" *Koṭālipa?) was the only one in India who directly pointed out Mind. In the same way, from among the numerous Tibetan adepts, sGam-po-pa was the only one to do likewise.[28]

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[25] The term *chig chod* was used in sGam-po-pa's Great Seal (Phyag-chen) tradition along with *chig thub*. It also occurs in Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen) writings with reference to their theory (*lta ba*) such as in the Great Perfection tantra the *Seng ge rtsal rdzogs chen po'i rgyud*, rNying ma'i rgyud bcu bdun, vol. 2, p. 247.3: *dgongs pa rang gnas ye shes chig chod kyi lta ba*, and p. 248: *chig chod kyi lta ba.*

[26] rDo-rje-shes-rab, *Khyad par lta bsgom spyod pa'i tshoms.* [*dGongs gcig 'grel pa rdo shes ma*], *dGongs gcig yig cha*, vol. 2, p. 407 (22b): *rje sgam po pas sman la dpe byas nas nga'i sems kyi ngo bo mthong ba 'di dkar po gcig thub bya ba yin gsung/*

[27] Zhang, Writings, p. 550.2: *dags po ba'i lugs kyi phyag rgya chen po ngo sprod.*

[28] 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Works, vol. 5, p. 510.

A telling event from very late in sGam-po-pa's life is also recorded in the *Blue Annals* in this connection:[29]

> In the end, when [sGam-po-pa] was passing into Nirvāṇa in the water-female-hen year (1153), two monks each holding a sacrificial cake (*bali*) in their hands approached, calling out: "We two request instructions on the Path of Means, so pray compassionately accept us!" "Don't let them come near," sGam-po-pa replied. Then one of his attendants advised them: "You should call out saying you are requesting the Great Seal!" Accordingly, those two also shouted out for a long time: "But we are requesting the Great Seal, sir!" Therefore sGam-po-pa said, "Now send them in," and he let them in, and also bestowed upon them the instructions of the Great Seal. In this way he brought up the Great Seal alone from among his teachings.

rJe sGam-po-pa had discovered within himself the treasure of innate wisdom, and for him it was also essential to try to convey it to others. And convey it he did, on a scale never before attempted within his lineage. To do so, he bent the traditional rules restricting how certain Vajrayāna teachings could be transmitted. He did this out of compassion for his students, in order to establish them in what was most important: profound meditative practice and insight. As he once remarked to his disciple Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa:[30]

> "I have broken the command of my master, Mi-la." "How so, sir?" asked [Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa]. "By expounding all the teachings to people." On another occasion he remarked: "I have obeyed the command of my master." "How so, sir?" asked his student. "By devoting this entire life to practice."

sGam-po-pa's Classification of the Great Seal

sGam-po-pa did not, of course, completely reject the old tantric classifications of the Great Seal or the traditional methods for introducing

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[29] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, p. 402 (*nya* 26b); cf. G. Roerich, transl., pp. 461-2.

[30] sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, p. 446.4: *ngas bla ma mi la'i bka' bcag gsung/ de gtsug lags zhus pas/ ngas chos thams cad mi la bshad pas gsung/ yang dus cig tsa na/ ngas bla ma'i bka' bzhin sgrubs gsung/ de tsug lags zhus pas/ ngas mi tshe zad mar sgrub pa byas pas gsung ngo/.*

it. Some of his teachings given in the more usual tantric doctrinal context follow the standard formulations, as for instance his public lecture entitled *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, in which he contrasts the Pāramitāyāna as a "path of accumulation" (*tshogs kyi lam*) with the Mantrayāna, which is a "path of means" (*thabs kyi lam*). There he gives what must have been for him a very standard and doctrinaire summary outline of Buddhist systems:[31]

I. Vehicle of the Śrāvaka (*nyan thos kyi theg pa*)
II. Vehicle of the Pratyeka (*rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa*)
III. The Great Vehicle (*theg pa chen po*)
  A. The Perfections [Vehicle], the Path of Preparatory Accumulation (*pha rol tu phyin pa tshogs kyi lam*)
    1. Mind-Only (*sems tsam*)
      a. The scriptural tradition maintaining that the cognitive image is true (*rnam par bden pa'i gzhung lugs*)
      b. The scriptural tradition maintaining that the cognitive image is false (*rnam par rdzun par 'dod pa'i gzhung lugs*)
    2. Madhyamaka (*dbu ma*)
      a. "Like an Illusion" (*sgyu ma lta bu*)
      b. "Not stationed anywhere" (*rab tu mi gnas pa*)
        i. "Integration in which one does not station oneself anywhere" (*zung 'jug rab tu mi gnas pa*)
        ii. "Interruption in which one does not station oneself anywhere" (*rgyun chad rab tu mi gnas pa'i gzhung*)
  B. The Mantra [Vehicle], a Path of Means (*gsang sngags thabs kyi lam*)
    1. Old versus New [Tantras] (*gsar ma/ rnying ma*)
    2. Outer versus Inner [Tantras] (*phyi pa/ nang pa*)
    3. Father Tantra versus Mother Tantra (*pha rgyud/ ma rgyud*), etc.

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[31] See sGam-po-pa, *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, Writings, vol. 1, pp. 171-2: *...'jug pa'i sgo bsam gyis mi khyab pa cig yod kyang/ bsdu na gsum yin nyan thos kyi theg pa'i sgor zhugs pa dang/ rang sangs rgyas kyi theg pa'i sgor zhugs pa dang/ theg pa chen po'i sgor zhugs nas nyams su len pa'o// de ltar 'jug pa'i sgo theg pa gsum yod kyang/ da res nyan rang gi theg pa de mi ston/ theg pa chen po'i sgor zhugs nas sgrub pa nyams su len pa'i thabs cig ston/ de la yang dbye na gzhung lugs mang du yod de/ sems tsam rnam par bden pa'i gzhung lugs dang/ rnam par rdzun par 'dod pa'i gzhung lugs dang gnyis/ dbu ma la sgyu ma dang* [sic!] *lta bu dang rab tu mi gnas pa'o// de las zung 'jug rab tu mi gnas pa dang/ rgyun chad rab tu mi gnas pa'i gzhung dang/ gsang sngags la yang* [p. 170] *gsar ma dang/ rnying ma dang/ phyi pa dang nang pa/ pha rgyud ma rgyud la sogs pa mang du yod kyang/ bsdu na gnyis pha rol tu phyin pa tshogs kyi lam dang/ gsang sngags thabs kyi lam mo/.*

In this discourse, sGam-po-pa in the end set forth the tantric path, which he characterized as "the tantric path of means that makes one realize through direct cognition the innate simultaneously arisen gnosis, having identified the correct gnosis on the basis of the 'warmth' of the guru's sustaining spiritual impulse."[32]

In another discussion, he enumerated a series of pairs of usual doctrinal classifications, showing the place of both the Great Seal (Phyag-chen) and the Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen: an old Tibetan "innateist" and "simultaneist" tradition) at the pinnacle of Mantrayāna Completion Stage (*rdzogs rim*) practice. The scheme he utilized could be outlined as follows:[33]

I. Interpretable meaning, conducive to good rebirths
II. Definitive meaning,[34] conducive to clearing away being born
  A. Vehicles of the Śrāvaka and Pratyeka
  B. Great Vehicle
    1. Perfection
    2. Resultant Mantra
      a. Production Stage
      b. Completion Stage
        i. Great Perfection (rDzogs-chen)
        ii. Great Seal (Phyag-chen, Mahāmudrā)

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[32] sGam-po-pa, vol. 1, p. 172.2: *bla ma'i byin brlabs kyi drod la rten nas/ yang dag pa'i ye shes ngos zin te/ lhan cig skyes pa'i ye shes mngon sum du rtogs par byed pa'i gsang sngags thabs kyi lam.*

[33] sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, pp. 219-220: *bka' sde snod rin po che rnam pa gsum gyi chos spo ti ri rgyud tsam pa cig yod kyang/ de thams cad kyi brjod bya'i don bsdu na gnyis/ drang don skye bar* [=ba] *bzang bar byed pa'i chos dang/ nges don skye ba 'dag par byed pa'i chos so/ .... nges don la dbye na gsum yod pa las/ nyan rang gis* [=gi] *theg pa mi ston/ theg pa chen po'i gdams ngag cig ston/ de la gnyis/ pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa dang/ gsang sngags 'bras bu'i theg pa'o// da res dang po de mi ston/ gnyis pa/ gsang sngags* [220] *'bras bu'i theg pa de ston/ de la gnyis/ bskyed pa'i rim pa'i gdams ngag dang rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i gdams ngag gnyis yod pa las/ 'dir bskyed rim mi ston/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa'i gdams ngag ston/ de la gnyis/ rdzogs pa chen po'i man ngag dang phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gnyis yod pa las/ 'dir phyag rgya chen po'i gdams ngag ston/ de la yang dri bcas dang dri ma med pa gnyis yod pa las/ 'dir dri ma med pa'i gdams ngag cig ston/.* This work is identified as the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor* by S. Karmay (1988), p. 144, n. 38.

[34] In another context, sGam-po-pa linked the distinction between provisional and definitive meaning to that between method and discriminative understanding. See his Writings, Vol. 1, p. 241: *drang don thabs kyi lam nyams su len pa dang/ nges don gnas lugs rtogs par byed pa shes rab kyi lam/.*

(A) With Impurities (*dri bcas*)
(B) Free from Impurities (*dri ma med pa*)

Here the Great Seal and Great Perfection are found as instructions of the Tantric Completion Stage, and this classification scheme would accordingly have been more or less acceptable to followers of the mainstream "New-School" (*gsar ma pa*) Mantrayāna traditions such as Sa-paṇ, since it was in harmony with some of the main gSar-ma-pa systems of tantric practice, such as the "Path with its Fruit" (*Lam 'bras*) instructions. sGam-po-pa expressed similar ideas elsewhere too, sometimes portraying the Great Perfection as occupying a parallel doctrinal position to the Great Seal as one of two practical instructions (*man ngag*) of the Mantrayāna completion stage (*rdzogs rim).*

A Sūtra-Tradition Great Seal

One of sGam-po-pa's departures from tradition was apparently his propagating a Sūtra method of the Great Seal, as distinct from the above-mentioned Tantric Great Seal.[35] One of his bKa'-gdams-pa contemporaries is said by later authorities to have maintained that the Sūtra basis for sGam-po-pa's special Great Seal teaching could be found in the *Samādhirāja Sūtra.*[36] (sGam-po-pa himself was traditionally recognized as being the rebirth of the Buddha's disciple Zla-'od-gzhon-nu, or Candraprabha Kumāra as he is known in Sanskrit, who pledged to

[35] This is also implied by the statement of 'Gos lo-tsā-ba quoted above: "... He gave instructions on the Great Seal to those who were suitable as recipients of the Perfection-Vehicle (Pāramitāyāna) teachings, even though they had not received Tantric initiation."

[36] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *nya* 21b-22a; G. Roerich transl., pp. 451f. The first Paṇ-chen Rin-po-che likewise held that the Sūtra basis for a Great Seal teaching could be found in this Sūtra, in the line: *chos rnams kun gyi rang bzhin phyag rgya che||*. See Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me, vol. 3, p. 578.3 (8b): *paṇ chen rin po ches| mdo ting nge 'dzin rgyal por| chos rnams kun gyi rang bzhin phyag rgya che| zhes pa khungs su mdzad nas mdo lugs la'ang phyag chen gyi tha snyad zhal gyis bzhes la|*. The word in the Sūtra, however, is simply *mudrā*, and not *mahāmudrā*. See Peking no. 795, vol. 31, p. 275.1.5 (*mdo thu* 7a) and vol. 32, p. 33.3.8 (*mdo thu* 182a.8): *de la chos thams cad kyi phyag rgya gang zhe na||*. See also Dutt, Skt. ed., pp. 21.15 and 643.1; cf. pp. 234.11 and 249.3, where the word *mudrā* also appears.

become that Sūtra's later propagator.)[37] Such a Sūtra-based method would have the advantage of avoiding the complicated ritual and practical preparations required for both Vajrayāna teacher and student, and it would widen the range of those who might be taught. But on the other hand it would require the lengthy training of students through the gradual stages of the Mahāyāna.

The later sympathetic dGe-lugs-pa master lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (1717-1786) accepted that sGam-po-pa had taught both Sūtra and Tantra methods:[38]

> The one who made very famous the terminology of practical instructions called the "Great Seal" was the matchless sGam-po-pa. In the latter's writings there are mentioned two methods for introducing the theory: (1) the tradition of the Perfections Vehicle and (2) the tradition of Mantra, and indeed he applied the term "Instruction in the Great Seal" to both. He also composed treatise[s] that demonstrated, through the quotation of many Sūtras, such points as how within the tradition of the Perfections Vehicle there exists the [authoritative, canonical] teaching of Emptiness as being the Great Seal.

And this was also the opinion of certain bKa'-brgyud-pa masters, with whom bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal disagreed.[39] One finds the 15th-century

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[37] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *nya* 21b-22a; G. Roerich transl., pp. 451f; and bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal 109a; L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 119.

[38] lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, p. 458.2 (*cha kha* 20b); cf. D. Lopez (1988), p. 266. S. Karmay (1988), p. 197, n. 97, notes that the Sūtra/Tantra distinction was applied to the Great Seal by some later Tibetan writers, particularly by certain later dGe-lugs-pas. He quotes Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me and the 5th Dalai bla-ma. Such a distinction was convenient for certain dGe-lugs-pa who were trying to advance their own "dGa ldan phyag chen" or "dGa' ldan bka' brgyud." The Great Fifth Dalai bla-ma, however, was opposed to this eclectic movement (in his opinion, the dGe-lugs should stick to their true dGe-lugs roots). And Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me, vol. 3, p. 566 (2b), admitted that in Tsong-kha-pa's time this particular tradition was never called the "Phyag rgya chen po." Instead it was known as the "Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu ma chen po*): *rje'i sku dus su/ dbu ma chen po bya ba las/ phyag chen gyi tha snyad dngos su ma mdzad kyang/*. On the Fifth Dalai bla-ma's views, see *ibid.*, p. 578.2 (8b): *rgyal dbang gis dge lugs dge lugs rang byas pa bzang mod/ bka' brgyud pa'i khrod du 'tshang nas ci bya zhes/ dge ldan bka' brgyud kyi tha snyad tsam yang mi bzhed la/*. On the term "Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu ma chen po*), see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1969), p. 60f; L. van der Kuijp (1983), p. 37; and S. Karmay (1988), p. 197.

[39] See also sDe-gzhung Rin-po-che, p. 27: [*mnyam med sgam po pa'i*] ... *rjes 'jug mkhas grub gong mas mdo lam phyag chen dang/ sngags lam phyag chen gnyis su dbye ba mdzad*

translator and scholar 'Gos-lo gZhon-nu-dpal concluding his history of the Mar-pa and Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud with precisely a discussion of this point:[40]

> Regarding the realization of the Great Seal, during the time of Mar-pa and Mid-la, [the masters] produced first the Gnosis of inner heat, and then by virtue of that, the realization of the Great Seal. And hence they held it also to be the Perfection Stage [of the Anuttarayoga Tantras]. Dags-po rin-po-che [sGam-po-pa]'s producing a realization of the Great Seal even in those beginners who had not received Tantric initiation was the tradition of the [general Mahāyāna] Perfections. Moreover, Dags-po rin-po-che said to Phag-mo-gru-pa, "The basic text of this Great Seal of ours is this *Mahāyānottaratantra Śāstra* [*Ratnagotravibhāga*] composed by the Lord Maitreya." The illustrious Phag-mo-gru-pa too stated the same thing to 'Bri-khung-pa, and consequently in the writings of Lord 'Bri-khung-pa ['Jig-rten-mgon-po] and his disciples there appear many expositions of the *Mahāyānottaratantra Śāstra*.

In sGam-po-pa's writings a few clearly non-Tantric or "Sūtra-class" instructions of this nature can be located. One example is found among his minor works. It is a teaching that he classified from the beginning as "gradualist" (*rim gyis pa*), though not specifying at the outset whether it belonged to Sūtra or Tantra.[41] From several later passages of the work

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la/. The same author, *ibid.*, points out that sGam-po-pa clearly did teach a Great Seal tradition which did not rely on the Mantrayāna.

[40] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, p. 632 (*nya* 141b): *phyag rgya chen po'i rtogs pa de yang mar pa dang rje btsun mid la gnyis kyi ring la/ sngon du gtum mo'i ye shes bskyed nas/ de'i stobs kyis phyag rgya chen po'i rtogs pa bskyed par mdzad pas rdzogs pa'i rim par yang bzhed do// dags po rin po che ni/ las dang po pa dbang bskur ma thob pa dag la yang phyag rgya chen po'i rtogs pa bskyed par mdzad pa ni pha rol tu phyin pa'i lugs te/ de yang dags po rin po ches dpal phag mo gru pa la/ 'o skol gyi phyag rgya chen po'i gzhung ni bcom ldan 'das byams pas mdzad pa'i theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bstan bcos 'di yin zhes gsungs shing/ dpal phag mo gru pas kyang rje 'bri khung pa la de skad du gsungs pas/ rje 'bri khung pa dpon slob kyi gsung rab rnams su theg pa chen po rgyud bla ma'i bshad pa mang du 'byung ba de yin no//*

See also M. Broido (1985), p. 12f. Cf. the comments in G. Roerich transl., p. 725, probably originating from dGe'-'dun-chos-'phel, that "Present day Tibetan scholars, especially those belonging to the dGe-lugs-pa school, do not admit the mahāmudrā doctrine as belonging to the Sūtra class." But he mentions the existence of the "dGe-ldan phyag-chen."

[41] sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, pp. 203.7ff. This instruction is noteworthy for the

(e.g. p. 205.2-3), and indeed from its general contents, it can be seen to be a teaching of the general non-Tantric Mahāyāna. sGam-po-pa here (p. 204.2) clearly distinguished practices that were designed for cultivating separately the "Path of Means" (*thabs kyi lam*) and "Path of Discriminative Understanding" (*shes rab kyi lam*). The parallel instruction of the "simultaneist" path he briefly describes as "One that consists of being introduced through a guru's instructions to the basis, reality, the original actual state, and then taking that as the path of practice,"[42] as opposed to here where the Path of Discriminative Understanding instruction is characterized as "for the cultivation of discriminative understanding, the import of the 'unproduced' profound emptiness of all entities of existence, at first a qualified teacher must introduce one to the fact that all that appears and is heard is the *dharmakāya*."[43] A simile he used (p. 204.6-7) to characterize this discovery was the poor man from a poor family who discovers a treasure [that had been present all along in the family house]. Later (p. 205.3) he also stressed the importance of learning and reflecting on the Mahāyāna teachings.

Another example of a "Sūtra-class" exposition is sGam-po-pa's most famous treatise—his "Ornament of Liberation" (*Thar rgyan*)—in which he explained the general Mahāyāna stages of practice. The structure of the composition is noteworthy for the emphasis it lays in the beginning on the "motivating cause" (*rgyu*), the Buddha Nature (*de gshegs snying po: tathāgata-garbha*).[44] sGam-po-pa alluded to Great Seal practices once in this work, but only quite late in the work, near the end of chapter 17, where he explained the cultivation of insight into ultimate reality.[45] It is precisely at this point that he introduced several quotations from the songs of the great Tantric adepts (*mahāsiddha*), from Tantras, and from

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extensive use of the verbal pair *ngo sprod/ ngo 'phrod* in the context of the general Mahāyāna.

[42] *Ibid.*: p. 204.1: *gzhi dngos po gshis kyi gnas lugs bla ma'i gdams ngag gis ngo sprod nas lam du 'khyer bar byed pa cig yin.*

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 204.5: *shes rab chos thams cad kyi zab mo stong pa nyid skye ba med pa'i don bsgom pa la/ dang por bla ma mtshan nyid dang ldan pa cig gis snang grags chos skur ngo sprod dgos pa yin.*

[44] This was noticed already by D. Seyfort Ruegg (1962), p. 324.

[45] See sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 260.4 (130b), where he refers to both the *Phyag rgya chen po'i sngon 'gro* and *Phyag rgya chen po'i khrid lugs*.

Sūtras of a certain orientation.

Here on the threshold of the Great Seal, he still keeps one foot in the general Mahāyāna. The question is raised: "Is then such understanding to be cultivated, if every factor of existence is after all empty?" Indeed, it is, replies sGam-po-pa. For example, even though silver ore has the nature of silver, until you smelt it, the silver will not appear. If you want molten silver, you must smelt the silver ore.[46] So, too, even though all factors of existence have from the very first had Emptiness as their nature, they appear to sentient beings as various objects and are experienced as various sufferings. Therefore this knowledge must be cultivated.[47]

But then he makes a significant shift away from the normal Mahāyāna standpoint. In the following sub-section of the same chapter—namely the sub-section dealing with the post-meditation practice (*rjes thob*)—he sets forth a radically transformed view. Though he urged from the start that the meditator should cultivate merit as much as possible through the Perfections such as generosity,[48] he then goes on to teach that all religious practices are included within just the seeing the nature of mind. Giving here a foretaste of the "fruit" and "simultaneist" viewpoint, he quotes several Tantras as well as a few Sūtras of a special orientation.[49] Then he concludes on the note that the foregoing gradualist teachings were only intended for the spiritually ill-equipped. And it is in this section that we find him saying (as quoted above):

> If you dwell within the insight into the ultimate—Emptiness—for even a single moment, this is immeasurably more meritorious than studying, reciting texts, or performing such meritorious deeds as practicing

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[46] This is more or less the same image as "refining gold," on which see L. Gómez (1987), pp. 123f, *et passim*. Here I think *dngul chu* should be read as meaning "molten silver" (*dngul zhun ma*) and not its more usual meaning, "quicksilver." Cf. the term *khro chu* for "molten metal or brass" and *gser chu* for "molten gold."

[47] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 259.1 (130a): H. V. Guenther (1971), pp. 215-16.

[48] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos... [thar pa rin po che'i rgyan]*, p. 263.3 (132a).

[49] sGam-po-pa had already quoted one of the classic Indian Buddhist sources for innateist introspection, attributing it to the *Nam mkha' rin po che'i mdo*. As is stated correctly in the *cig car ba* manual in Pelliot Tib. 116, p. 164.1, this verse comes from the *rTen 'brel snying po* (v. 7) of Nāgārjuna. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 85-6, n. 161. See also H. Guenther, transl., p. 215, note 154.

generosity.[50] If a person possesses the insight into Emptiness, there is not a single thing not included within this factor.[51]
The path, consisting of the Six Perfections, is also completely present in this alone.[52] For as the Sūtra of the Vajra Concentration (*rDo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo: *Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*) states: "If you do not waver from Emptiness, this includes the six Perfections."[53]

Here sGam-po-pa quotes from several Ch'an apocryphal Sūtras,[54]

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[50] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos...* [*thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*], p. 264.2 (132b): *de ltar don dam shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa de'i ngang la dar cig tsam gnas na bskal pa'i bar du nyan pa'am/ klog pa'am dge ba'i rtsa ba sbyin pa la sogs pa byas pa bas bsod nams dpag tu med pa che ba yin no//*. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), p. 219.

[51] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos...* [*thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*], p. 265.6 (133a): *de lta bu'i stong pa nyid kyi don dang ldan na/ chos 'di la ma 'dus pa cig kyang med do//*. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), p. 220.

[52] Regarding the inclusion of all six perfections within one factor (such as the insight into Emptiness, or non-conceptualizing concentration), this was a common teaching of the *cig car ba* traditions. In Pelliot Tib. 116 (171b.1) and 117 (verso 6.4) we find for instance a brief treatise attributed to Mo-ho-yen teaching just that, namely the: *bSam brtan myi rtog pa'i nang du pha rol du phyind pa drug dang/ bcu 'dus pa bshad pa'i mdo*. Cf. L. Gómez (1983), pp. 79-80 and 121. In his third *Bhāvanākrama* (Skt. pp. 25-6), Kamalaśīla refuted the thesis that the six Perfections are included within Dhyāna. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 95, n. 180; 183f and 206. In the Tibetan translation the same objection is stated (P. 5312 *sGom pa'i rim pa* p. 41.1.7 [*dbu ma a* 72a]): *gal te bsam gtan nyid du pha rol tu phyin pa drug 'dus pas na des bsten pas pha rol tu phyin pa thams cad bsten par 'gyur te/ de'i phyir sbyin pa la sogs pa gzhan so sor bsten mi dgos pa skad du bya na yang/ de mi rung ste....*

[53] sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos...* [*thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*], p. 267.5 (134a): *lam pha rol tu phyin pa drug kyang 'di nyid la tshang ste/ rdo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo las/ stong pa nyid la*[s] *ma g.yos na// pha rol phyin pa drug 'dus so// zhes gsungs so//*. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), pp. 221-22.

[54] Studies on these Sūtras are mentioned by Daishun Ueyama (1983), pp. 332f, namely the articles of Hironobu Obata (1974) and (1975). Obata interprets the evidence from the Tun Huang manuscripts Pelliot Tib. 116, 117, 812 and 813 as indicating that a lineage of the Pao T'ang School, the tradition of the Ch'an master Wu-chu, had arrived in Tibet via the kingdom of Nan-chao before the time of the bSam-yas debate. In his second article, IBK 23 (2), pp. 170-71, Obata studied nine such "Sūtras" or similar works found in Tibetan translation, listing them by Chinese titles, giving Taishō numbers, locating most in the lDan kar ma catalogue (nos. 253, 154, 573, 259, 257, 260 and 614), and in the Peking Kanjur (P. nos. 803, 909, 902-3, 930, 922, 805), and indicating where they were quoted in the Tun Huang documents. I am indebted to Ms. Chizuko Yoshimizu for help with this article.

See also J. Broughton (1983), p. 48, n. 6. Here one finds quotations for instance from the *gTsug gtor chen po'i mdo* (the Chinese composition *Ta fo-ting ching*) and the *Phyogs su rgyas pa'i mdo* (the Chinese composition *Fang-kuang ching*). The latter quotation is given

including a few, such as the just-cited *rDo rje ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo* (**Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*), that had been translated at an early time into Tibetan from Chinese and included in later Tibetan canons.[55] Some of these same sources or quotations had been included in a very early Tibetan handbook for practitioners of the (*cig car ba*) "Mahāyoga" (Tibetan Ch'an) that has been recovered from Tun Huang,[56] and probably they were transmitted by later Tibetan *cig car ba* traditions.[57] The presence

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by sGam-po-pa, but attributed to the *Las rnam par dag pa'i mdo* (Cf. Guenther, transl. p. 223). sGam-po-pa, p. 269.1 (135a):

gang zhig bshags pa 'dod byed cing// drang por 'dug la yang dag ltos//
yang dag nyid la yang dag lta// 'di ni 'gyod tshang mchog yin no//.

In the Peking Kanjur, P. no. 930, the Sūtra title begins: *'Phags pa thar pa chen po phyogs su rgyas pa 'gyod tshangs kyis sdig sbyangs te....* It is said to have been "translated from Chinese."

Both works incidentally also quote the same passage from the *Ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo* (*Jñānālokālaṃkāra*). See Pelliot 116, p. 128.2: *ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo las// rgyu rkyen rten 'brel bshad pa dang/ rim par 'jug pa bstan pa yang/ rmongs pa rnams la thabs kyis gsungs// lhun kyis grub pa'i chos 'di la/ rims su sbyang ba ji zhig yod/...* Cf. H. Guenther, transl., p. 224; and sGam-po-pa, p. 270.2 (135b): *ye shes snang ba rgyan gyi mdo las// rgyu rkyen 'brel bar bshad pa dang// rim par 'jug pa bstan pa yang// rmongs pa rnams la thabs su gsungs/ lhun gyis grub pa'i chos 'di la// rim gyis sbyong ba ci zhig yod//.*

On the "'Khor lo bcu pa," see Whalen Lai (1990), pp. 178. On the question of apocryphal Chinese Sūtras in Tibetan translation or their use by Chinese debaters in Tibet, see also L. Gómez (1983a), p. 395, and J. Broughton (1983), p. 57, n. 36.

55 In vol. 32 of the reprinted Peking Kanjur (*mdo sna tshogs, du*), for instance, the "Vajrasamādhi Sūtra" appears, though in its Tibetan title it is called not a "*mdo*," but rather a "*chos kyi yi ge*" ("Dharma text"), and it is indicated as having been translated from Chinese. The above quotation is given on f. 131a.5: *ngo bo nyid rdo rje dang mtshungs pas dkon mchog gsum mi zhig ste// stong pa'i chos rnams mi g.yo bas pha rol tu phyin pa drug dang ldan no//.* This same passage is quoted by bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 102a; see also L. Lhalungpa transl., p. 113.

R. Buswell (1990), p. 23, describes the work as "a syncretistic apocryphon containing pronounced Ch'an elements," and in a recent book devoted the subject (*The Formation of Ch'an Ideology in China and Korea: The Vajrasamādhi Sūtra*, Princeton, 1989) he has compared "catalogue evidence about the dissemination of the text with legendary accounts of its recovery to show that it was written in Korea, sometime around 685 C.E., by an early adept of the Korean Śon (Zen) tradition." As Buswell further remarks (*ibid.*): "Introduced some three decades later into China and thence Tibet, the sūtra influenced the subsequent development of the Chinese Ch'an and Tibetan rNying-ma schools."

56 Pelliot Tib. 116, *dMyigs su med pa tshul gcig pa'i gzhung.*

57 Some of these works were listed in the lDan kar ma catalogue, and passages were quoted in early Tibetan *cig car ba* writings. L. Gómez (1983a), p. 401, cites the quotation of the *rDo rje ting nge 'dzin* in Vimalamitra's *Cig car 'jug pa'i rnam par mi rtog pa'i bsgom don.* Cf. its quotation in gNubs Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes's *bSam gtan mig sgron*, p. 162.6.

of such quotations in sGam-po-pa's general writings had been noticed by certain Tibetan scholars, as alluded to for instance by Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma, who himself attached no particular importance to them:

> Regarding the matchless Dwags-po rin-po-che's [i.e. sGam-po-pa's] composition of treatises proving the existence of the [Buddha's] teaching of emptiness in the Perfections (Pāramitā) tradition to be the Great Seal by quoting many Sūtra quotations, some have said: "Such words of the Sūtras do not appear in the canon of the translated Word (*bka' 'gyur*)."
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> Nevertheless [regarding this] my omniscient Guru has said: "Those Sūtras are found within the canon of the translated Word translated into Chinese. And though they are not worded in exactly identical ways, [passages with] the same sense can be seen also in some other Sūtras translated into Tibetan, such as the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthita[samādhi] Sūtra* (*Da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa'i* [*ting nge 'dzin gyi*] *mdo*).[58]

The presence of these quotes does, however, raise several questions: Where did sGam-po-pa receive these traditions from? Did he have direct access to Chinese materials that had been suppressed in the late 8th century? Or did he merely learn them from some intermediate source, such as from the writings of one of the early Tibetan Ch'an-influenced "simultaneist" (*cig car ba*) traditions such as are recorded in the *bSam gtan mig sgron* of gNubs Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes? It seems unlikely that he would have come upon them merely through a random reading of Sūtras.

A Great Seal beyond Sūtra and Tantra

Though some clear indications of a "Sūtra-tradition" (*mdo lugs*) or "Sūtra-path" (*mdo lam*) Great Seal presentation method can thus be found in sGam-po-pa's works, such a terminology may not have actually originated with him. In fact, the 16th-century Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud

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[58] Thu'u-bkwan, p. 168.4 (*kha* 24b.4): *mnyam med dwags po rin po ches phar phyin theg pa'i lugs la stong nyid la phyag rgya chen por gsungs pa yod tshul mdo lung mang po drangs nas bsgrubs pa'i bstan bcos mdzad pa la/ 'ga' zhig gis/ mdo tshig de 'dra bka' 'gyur na mi snang zhes zer mod/ rgya nag tu 'gyur ba'i bka' 'gyur khrod na mdo de dag snang la/ tshig ris ji lta ba bzhin min kyang don gcig pa da ltar gyi sangs rgyas mngon sum du bzhugs pa'i mdo sogs bod du 'gyur ba'i mdo gzhan 'ga' zhig na'ang snang ngo/ /.*

master sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal asserted that such a twofold division of the Great Seal teaching method into Sūtra and Tantra had not been sGam-po-pa's original teachings. Indeed, bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal maintained that such a division was introduced only by later followers of the tradition, though he himself took pains to try to show that the highest Great Seal instructions were not based on Tantric mysticism.[59] sGam-po-pa's real position, according to bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, was that the Great Seal was a third doctrinal class quite outside all other usual doctrinal classifications, including both Sūtra and Tantra. The latter quoted sGam-po-pa as maintaining the Great Seal to be a third (or even fourth) class of teachings that was quite extrinsic to both non-Tantric Mahāyāna and Tantra,[60] and in sGam-po-pa's own writings one finds several interesting expressions of these notions.[61] In his answers to his disciple the Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa, sGam-po-pa discriminated the following three approaches to Buddhist practice:[62]

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[59] See sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, pp. 99a-101a; and L. Lhalungpa (1986), pp. 110-112. Cf. Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, who took strong exception to the view expressed by certain other bKa'-brgyud-pas that the Great Seal linked to Tantric mysticism was inferior to Sūtra-based Great Seal. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1261, and Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, p. 14.5 (7b.5): *mdo sngags so so'i dgongs par byas nas/ phyag chen phyi ma las snga ma bzang ba bka' brgyud rin po che'i bzhed pa yin ces bris gda' ba ni ches mi 'thad pas gzhan du bkag zin to//.*

[60] See, for instance, bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, sGam-po spyan-snga, *Nges don*, p. 101a (L. Lhalungpa transl. [1986], pp. 110-112), who quotes sGam-po-pa. sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal represents sGam-po-pa as having held precisely that the Great Seal was a doctrine independent of the Sūtras and Tantras. See L. Lhalungpa transl., p. 112. As mentioned above, it was bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal's view that the integration of the teachings into the Sūtra and Tantra systems was a development introduced later by followers of the tradition. See also sGam-po-pa, *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, pp. 268.6 and 283.5. But as also mentioned above, the 8th Karma-pa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje rejected the view expressed in the writings of certain other bKa'-brgyud-pas that the Great Seal linked to Tantric mysticism was in any way inferior to the non-Tantric Great Seal.

[61] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, p. 438 and Writings, vol. 1, p. 268. Some later Dwags-po bKa-brgyud-pas (especially within the 'Bri-gung-pa tradition) in certain contexts have not maintained such a threefold scheme because of the unacceptable doctrinal difficulties it would entail (at least in the context of general Mahāyāna doctrinal discussions). See, for instance, 'Bri-gung rig-'dzin Chos-kyi-grags-pa, p. 45 (23a): *mdo sngags gnyis las tha dad pa'i lam zhig yod na rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis ma gsungs pa'i lam du thal bas,* and rDo-rje-shes-rab, vol. 1, p. 396.1 (*nga* 25a.1).

[62] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, pp. 438.6: *lam rnam pa gsum du 'gro gsung ngo/ rjes dpag lam du byed pa dang/ byin brlabs lam du byed pa dang/ mngon sum lam du byed pa gsum yin gsung/ mtshan nyid lam pha rol tu phyin pa ni rjes dpag lam du*

1) The "definition" (i.e. scholastic general Mahāyāna) path of the Perfections (*pāramitā*), which takes inference for its path (*rjes dpag lam du byed pa* = *mtshan nyid lam pha rol tu phyin pa*)
2) The Mahāyāna Mantra method, which takes [the guru's] sustaining spiritual power for its path, based on the stages of generation and completion (*byin brlabs lam du byed pa* = *theg chen gsang sngags*)
3) The innately and simultaneously arising luminosity of mind [of the Great Seal], which takes direct perception (*pratyakṣa*) for its path (*mngon sum lam du byed pa* = *lhan cig skyes pa 'od gsal* [*phyag chen*])

He further asserted that there are two types of individuals who enter these three paths, namely the gradualist (*rim gyis pa*) and simultaneist (*cig car ba*).

The Great Seal is shown to be the highest or ultimate in this scheme by its final position in the threefold enumeration. The key difference that sets it apart here and makes it supreme is what it uses as its special cognitive method, namely direct, non-conceptual perception (the *pramāṇa* of *pratyakṣa*)—as opposed to inference or the spiritual power of the master. (In most other contexts, however, the guru's propelling power or sustaining spiritual impulse is highly stressed as essential for the Great Seal.)

sGam-po-pa comes back to this topic in a subsequent passage, where he speaks of the characteristic practices used by three distinct traditions—(1) the Perfections, (2) Mantra, and (3) "my tradition"—for giving rise to realization (*rtogs pa*) in the mind. He states:

> By the tradition of the Perfections, realization arises in the mind based on the trio of the Thought of Awakening (*bodhicitta*), [the insight of] "Like an illusion," and Emptiness. By the Mantra tradition, realization arises in the mind based on the trio of the body as deity, voice as mantra, and mind as Ultimate Reality. If you don't realize it, you don't attain Buddhahood. By my tradition, [descriptive phrase missing?], by this way of practicing religion, there is no going down, only going upwards. Those of sharpest faculties become Buddhas. Those of middling [faculties] will be born in the five abodes of the

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byed pa bya ba yin/ theg pa chen po gsang sngags ni bskyed rdzogs gnyis la brten nas byin brlabs lam du byed pa yin/ mngon sum lam du byed pa ni lhan cig skyes pa 'od gsal bya ba yin gsung/ lam gsum la 'jug pa'i gang zag ni gnyis te/ rims kyis pa dang/ cig car ba'o//

Saints. Even the worst are born as gods.[63]

Another similar threefold classification of spiritual paths given by sGam-po-pa, which likewise shows the Great Seal at the pinnacle, is the following:[64]

1) The Perfections vehicle, a path that eliminates the basis (*gzhi spong ba'i lam = phar phyin*)
2) The Mantra vehicle, [a path] that transforms the basis (*gzhi sgyur ba = gsang sngags*)
3) The Great Seal of the highest Mantra or the point of the Great Perfection, [a path] that knows the defilements as the basis of the great gnosis (*gzhir shes pa = phyag chen, rdzogs chen*)

Here the Great Seal practitioner is asserted to have a special relationship with the spiritual ground or basis (*gzhi*), which in this context refers to the affliction- (*kleśa-*) ridden ordinary personality. According to this scheme, the normal Perfections-Vehicle or general Mahāyāna approach is to get rid of this basis through the arising of its antidote, Gnosis, while the Mantra vehicle seeks to transform it through an altered vision which sees the divine nature of things. The Great Seal, by contrast, simply knows or understands the basis directly.[65] This third way, the understanding of the

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[63] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, pp. 440.2: *pha rol tu phyin pa'i lugs kyis/ byang chub kyi sems dang sgyu ma lta bu dang/ stong pa gsum la rten nas rtogs pa rgyud la 'khrungs/ sngags kyi lugs kyis lus lha/ ngag bzlas pa/ yid chos nyid gsum la rten nas rtogs pa rgyud la 'khrungs/ mi rtogs na sangs mi rgya/ yu phu'i lugs kyis/ chos kyi 'khyer lugs 'dis/ yar la 'gro ba las mar la mi 'gro ba yin/ dbang po rab sangs rgyas pa yin/ 'bring 'phags pa'i gnas lngar skye ba yin/ tha mar yang lhar skyes gsung/*

[64] sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, p. 268.6: *lam rnam pa gsum yin gsung/ de la rnam pa gsum ni/ gzhi spong ba'i lam ni nyon mongs pa spong bar 'dod/ gnyen po ye shes rgyud la skye bar 'dod pa ni/ pha rol tu phyin pa'i gdams pa'o/ / gzhi sgyur ba ni gsang sngags te/ ji ltar sgyur na/ phyi snod kyi 'jig rten gzhal yas khang du blta/ nang bcud sems can lha dang lha mor blta/ bza' btung thams* [268] *cad bdud rtsir blta/ nyon mongs pa ye shes chen po'i gzhir shes pa ni gsang sngags bla na med pa phyag rgya chen po'i don dam* [=nam?]/ *rdzogs pa chen po'i don te/ de yang ngo sprod nas chos thams cad la spang du yang med/ thams cad sems kyi rnam 'phrul yin/ 'od gsal bar shes pa ni/ gzhi shes pa yin gsung ngo/*

[65] Here it is interesting to compare the remarks of D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 131, who in a different context distinguishes three general approaches within Buddhism: 1) a "gradualist" current (of the Sūtras and Śāstras) including the "allopathic" use of counteragents and salvific means, 2) an "innatist" and "spontaneist" tendency which uses a "Nature-cure" based on the holistic and immediate recognition of Mind, and 3) the "homeopathic" methods of the Tantras by which the obstacles are cured by means of themselves.

cognitive and emotional defilements (*kleśa*) as the basis for the great Gnosis, is the ultimate reality of the highest Mantrayāna Great Seal, which is also the point of the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*).

The Great Seal and the Great Perfection

Some of the above conceptions are indeed similar to the Great Perfection system of theory and practice, and may have been partly borrowed from or influenced by it. The latter was an ancient Tibetan simultaneist tradition that characterized itself typically as, for instance, "the doctrine that transcends all those of Sūtrayāna and Vajrayāna."[66] It, too, characteristically discounted the efficacy of scriptures, logic, language, concepts, and other ordinary means of knowledge. Why would it need them or other purposeful methods? The fruit was already perfectly complete in the primordial basis of mind; this was the gist of the "Great Perfection." A very early Great Perfection work, the *sBas pa'i rgum chung*, elaborates on the insignificant role intellect and words can play in this matter:[67]

> To what extent does something which is the profound Non-Conceptual immediately appear as an object of intellect? [Answer:] The experience of the profound Non-Conceptual, since it is an experience, is not just that [intellectual understanding]. When investigating the phenomenon as it actually is [i.e. phenomena-as-such, the ultimate], one phenomenon cannot get at [another] phenomenon. Therefore, no matter how profound the words are that one states, how could they ever be commensurate with the actual point [of ultimate reality]?

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[66] See S. Karmay (1988), p. 19. Here Karmay presents the contents of chapter 4 of the biography of the partly legendary founder of the rDzogs-chen, Vairocana, in which this quality is attributed to the rDzogs-chen doctrine of the legendary Indian master dGa'-rab-rdo-rje.

[67] S. Karmay (1988), pp. 74-5:
ji tsam rtog myed zab mo zhig/ blo'i yul du snang zhe na/
myi rtog zab mo nyams myong ba/ myong ba yin phyir de nyid myin/
ji bzhin ba'i chos brtsad de/ chos la chos ni myi 'jug bas/
ji tsam zab mo'i tshig brjod kyang/ don dang 'tsham par ga la 'gyur/.

The 11th-century Great Perfection scholastic Rong-zom Paṇḍita in his defence of the Great Perfection stressed the need for faith over reasoning, and asserted that critical reasoning finds its application only within the sphere of those who maintain the existence of substantially existent entities: "These disproofs through reasoning [of yours] are nothing more than the [fictive conceptual] objectifying of one thing standing in mutual opposition to another, by you who hold the theory that substantial entities exist."[68] But what sort of mind could in fact apprehend the absolute? Rong-zom explained by discerning three classes of objects and their corresponding three types of intelligence or perceptual means. The first two types of knowledge functioned through the traditional Buddhist personality "aggregates" (*skandha*) of "apperception" (*saṃjñā*) and "feeling" (*vedanā*), and the last would correspond to *prajñā*, which belongs to the *skandha* of "mental forces" (*saṃjñā*):[69]

(1) A conceptually determined object (*dmigs pa*) is known by intelligence that discriminates through (conceptually labeling) apperception.
(2) An immediately appearing thing (*snang ba*) is known by intelligence that discriminates through "feeling" [i.e. simple sense perception].
(3) The phenomenal mark of the ultimate is known by intelligence that discriminates through stainless discriminating understanding.

This three-fold analysis of Rong-zom's differs in details from those of sGam-po-pa, but it is similar in certain important respects—e.g. in its rejecting of conceptual means and claiming a third special means of knowledge for reaching its highest of insights.

On some occasions, sGam-po-pa seems in fact to identify the Great Seal and the Great Perfection in their essentials and to treat them as

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[68] Rong-zom, *Theg pa chen po'i*, 78a: *rigs pa'i* [=pas] *gnod pa 'di dag kyang khyed dngos por lta ba rnams phan tshun gcig la gcig 'gal ba dmigs pa tsam du zad de/* Quoted here from S. Karmay (1988), p. 128, n. 40.

[69] Rong-zom, *Theg pa chen po'i*, p. 69a (79a?): *dmigs pa ni 'du shes kyis bye brag tu byas pas* [pa'i] *blo'i spyod yul lo/ snang ba ni tshor bas bye brag tu byas pas* [pa'i] *blo'i spyod yul lo/ ngo bo nyid kyi mtshan nyid ni shes rab dri ma med pas bye brag tu byas pas* [pa'i] *blo'i spyod yul lo/.* Quoted here from S. Karmay (1988), p. 128.

Here the term *dmigs pa* seems to stand for objects of conceptually determined knowledge. The term *snang ba* indicates the object of non-conceptual or pre-conceptual sense knowledge, and *tshor ba* "feeling" apparently indicates the most fundament level of direct sense perception, the bare reaction resulting from contact.

being the same ultimate third path beyond the Pāramitāyāna and Tantra. As seen above, he taught that the completion stage is revealed through direct instruction, and that it has two types: instructions of the Great Perfection and the Great Seal.[70] Nevertheless, on still other occasions sGam-po-pa pointedly distanced himself from the radical and unrealistic claims of instant "realization" made by some Great Perfection yogis.[71]

Distinguishing the Perfections Vehicle from Mantra Vehicle

sGam-po-pa used the above sets of doctrinal distinctions to classify the teachings and to orient the student for receiving instructions that would show the way beyond conceptualization and toward direct insight. His schema were nevertheless based upon conceptual distinctions that had been established within the general epistemological theories of the Indian Buddhist Pramāṇa tradition as well as from theories of Tantric practice and Mahāyāna Sūtra interpretation. Moreover, sGam-po-pa's application

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[70] sGam-po-pa, vol. 1, p. 220: *rdzogs pa'i rim pa gdam*[s] *ngag ston/ de la gnyis/ rdzogs pa chen po'i man ngag dang phyag rgya chen po gnyis yod pa las/.* See also p. 301.2: ... *phyag rgya chen po zer yang rung/ rdzogs pa chen po zer yang rung ste/ de thams cad kyi dgos byed sems las su rung ba yin/*

[71] See sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, p. 438-39. Here in his reply to the questions of the Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa, sGam-po-pa portrayed the rDzogs-pa chen-po as following a more extreme simultaneous (*cig-car-ba*) doctrine. He relates a story according to which Mi-la ras-pa is said to have belittled the radical rDzogs-chen-pa claims of instant Awakening. Mi-la is said to have pointed to a little boy of about five years of age and said: "The followers of the Great Perfection are like him. It is like this child saying that he has the powers of a twenty-five-year-old [adult]. The followers of the Great Perfection too speak of 'Buddhahood now,' but it is not really meaningful." Elsewhere (Writings, vol. 1, p. 162) sGam-po-pa himself does use the simile of the immature human child—along with those of the lion cub and the new moon—as suitable for illustrating the meditator's first glimpse of the Dharmakāya.

According to another characterization of the Great Perfection attributed to the dge-bshes brGya-yon-bdag appearing just before in the same work (p. 438.1), the rDzogs-chen-pa typically maintained: "If you attain realization (*rtogs*) in the morning, you awaken to Buddhahood in the morning; if you attain realization in the evening, you awaken to Buddhahood in the evening" (*nang rtogs na nang sangs rgya/ nub rtogs na nub sangs rgya).* But it should be remembered that such claims were intrinsic to the so-called "fruit" (*'bras bu*) instructions, such as the *Thog bab* precepts (attributed to Maitrīpāda).

According to 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *nya* 12b (G. Roerich transl., p. 430), the great Mi-la ras-pa first received the Great Perfection instructions from 'Bre-ston Lha-dga' at Rong, but without positive results. The latter then recommended that he go to Mar-pa, who introduced his disciples to the absolute through initiation rites.

of them was actually not ruthlessly anti-Tantric. At least twice in minor writings published with his public sermon the *Tshogs chos yon tan phun tshogs*, he specified the Perfections Vehicle (*pāramitāyāna*) method alone as being limited to taking the object as a conceptually conceived universal or as an exterior apprehended object, and thus he there remained within a more traditional tantric context. In the first passage he drew a distinction between two classes of objects that each concentrates on in their investigations, namely between external, physical objects and internal, psychological objects:[72]

> What is the difference between the Perfections and Mantra [Vehicles]? The Perfections [Vehicle] is what is called "That which takes for its object the cognitive image of the exterior object." That is because [its followers] dissolve and make empty exterior objects of sense apprehension by means of the reason of their being "devoid of one and many," saying that if the apprehended objects have been thoroughly investigated, then the fetter of the apprehending subject will become loosed of itself, [as authoritatively stated] "There being no apprehended object, there is no apprehending subject for that,"[73] and thus they do not investigate the interior mind that apprehends.
>
> The [followers of] Mantra do not investigate external apprehended objects. They impress a seal. They say that the mind ... is not established as any nature when one views what sort of nature it may have. That sense of its not being anything is what is called "awareness" (*rig pa*), and it is the object of experience for Gnosis, whereas this is not seen by a mind that conceptually thinks.

In the second such passage, which is much more corrupt in the available text, the distinction hinges rather on which of the two means of cognition

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[72] sGam-po-pa, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 265.6: *'o na pha rol tu phyin pa dang gsang sngags gnyis kyi khyad par gang zhes na/ pha rol tu phyin pa ni don phyi'i* [sic!] *rnam pa yul du byed pa zhes bya ste/ phyi bzung ba'i yul 'di cig dang du bral gyis gtan tshigs kyis gshigs nas stongs par byed/ bzung ba med cing der 'dzin med/ bzung ba'i yul rtsad chod na 'dzin pa'i sems sgrig rang brdal zer nas nang 'dzin pa'i* [p. 266] *sems la rtogs spyod* [=rtog dpyod] *mi gtong/ gsang sngags ni phyi gzung ba'i yul la rtogs spyod mi gtong/ rgyas 'debs byed/ sems ... rang bzhin ci lta bur 'dug bltas pas ci'i ngo bor yang ma grub ste/ de lta bu ci yang ma yin pa'i don de la rig pa zhes bya ste/ ye shes kyi spyod yul yin pa la/ rnam rtog gi blos mthong ba ma yin te/*

[73] Vasubandhu, *Triṃśikā* 28d: *gzung ba med pas de 'dzin med//*. Skt.: *grāhyābhāve tadgrahāt.*

the object belongs to, i.e. whether it is the universal of conceptual thought and inference, or the particular sense data of direct perception:[74]

> What is the difference between the Perfections and Mantra [Vehicles]? The Perfections [Vehicle] takes as its object the cognitive image of the object-universal. The Mantra takes the actual, direct object (read: *don dngos*) as the "path" [i.e. as the material for use in practice]. "Taking the cognitive image of the object-universal as the path" means the phenomenal mark of all factors of existence are dissolved by the [reasoning of] the absence of one and many, and thereby are unestablished. What is not established as "one" [i.e. as a single thing] is not established as an assemblage. Based on that, having made all factors of existence not established as either one or many, having mentally made [everything] as like the perfectly clear sky and then placing the mind concentratedly [in such a state] is what is called "Taking the cognitive image of the object-universal as the object."
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> The taking of the actual, direct object (*don dngos*) as the path [i.e. as object, is the following]: The path of [yogic] means forcibly subdues, ...

Even when sGam-po-pa sometimes did teach the Great Seal in its traditional Mantrayāna context (i.e. as a "fruit" instruction of the "fruit" vehicle, in connection with the special yoga instructions of the completion stage), he believed that there was no single fixed order for introducing it. The teaching method depended on what type of student was to be taught. Once when he was asked by his student Phag-mo-gru-pa rDo-rje-rgyal-po whether it was better to teach "inner heat" (*gtum mo*) first and the Great Seal later, or in the reverse order, sGam-po-pa answered as follows, pointing out also the dangers of wrongly teaching it:[75]

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[74] sGam-po-pa, Writings, Vol. 1, p. 268.1: *pha rol tu phyin pa dang gsang sngags kyi khyad par gang yin* [zhe] *na/ pha rol tu phyin pa ni don spyi'i rnam pa yul du byed pa yin/ gsang sngags ni don* [dngos] *lam du byed pa yin/ don spyi'i rnam pa lam du byed pa ni/ chos thams cad kyi mtshan nyid* [gcig] *dang du bral gyis gshig pas ma grub/ gcig ma grub pa ste bsags pa ma grub/ de la brten nas chos thams cad cig dang du ma gang yang* [ma] *grub par byas nas/ nam mkha' rnam par dag pa lta bur blos byas nas 'jog pa ni/ don spyi'i rnam pa yul du byed pa yin no/ don dngos lam du byed pa'i* [better: pa ni?] *thabs lam drag tu bcun pas/ ....*

[75] sGam-po-pa, *Phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan*, p. 470.2: *de gnyis gang zag gis* [sic] *rigs kyis 'byed de/ na so zhan* [=gzhon?] *pa rtsa dang khams bzang ba la gtum mo rang nas khrid cing bsgoms pas drod rtags myur du 'ong/ de la phyag rgya chen po btab pas nyams rtogs myur du 'char gsung/ na so rgas pas rlun* [sic] *mi chun pa'i rigs tshan cig la phyag rgya chen*

Those two [methods] can be distinguished according to the class of individual [to be taught]. That is, for a youthful person with excellent [yogic] channels and elements (*rtsa dang khams*), signs of imminent attainment will come quickly through meditation after having been instructed in inner heat itself. By [then] imparting the Great Seal to him, experience will quickly arise. To a type of person whose psychic "air" (*rlung*: *prāṇa*) is uncontrolled due to more advanced age, it is better to impart the Great Seal or the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor.*[76] By imparting the Great Seal from the beginning, it may happen that [the student] becomes set in wild or lazy ways (? *dred pa*), having become bad in deeds when [a realization of the Great Seal] doesn't arise in [the student's] own mind.

Thus sGam-po-pa sometimes presented the Great Seal within the Mantra system of special yogas and on other occasions quite outside and removed from that system. Doctrinal justification for the latter approach could be found in the classification of the Great Seal as a separate and distinct third transmission outside of and superior to either of the two normally recognized doctrinal systems of the general Mahāyāna and the usual Mantrayāna.[77] In this third extraordinary context—which was accessible only to an unusually well-endowed student—the special doctrine was characterized as not relying upon words and concepts or upon special yogic practices or attainments, but as consisting of the disciple's being introduced directly to the nature of his mind by an accomplished, awakened master. The ordinary general Mahāyāna approach, by contrast, relied on scripture and reasoning, and therefore it was automatically suspect because of the inadequacies of the word- and concept-based salvific approaches and cognitive means that such scriptural and rational studies utilized.[78] sGam-po-pa in fact sometimes verges on criticizing

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po'am lhan cig skyes sbyor btab pa dga' ste/ dang po nas phyag rgya chen po btab pas rang rgyud la ma skyes par las la ngan du song nas/ dred pa yang 'ong gsung/.

[76] As mentioned above, this is a Tantric Great Seal instruction composed by sGam-po-pa himself. See his works, vol. 1, pp. 219-224.

[77] Cf. the views of Mo-ho-yen, who on the ultimate level rejected the Triple vehicle (*triyāna*) classification (i.e. into the vehicles of Śrāvaka, Pratyeka and Bodhisattva) "in favour of the Unique Vehicle (*ekayāna*) or even the Non-Vehicle (*ayāna*)—free from all verbalizations and conceptualizations." See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 123.

[78] But when teaching the general Mahāyāna, sGam-po-pa of course stressed the need for preliminary learning and reflection. See his Writings, vol. 1, pp. 211 and 216.

even the "ordinary" Vajrayāna along the same lines. In one minor work we find him stating that *expositions* (*bshad pa*) of both the Sūtras *and* Tantras (as opposed to direct practical instructions, *man ngag*) degenerate or fall to the level of conceptualization (lit.: to the "cognitive image of an object-universal": *don spyi'i rnam pa la shor*):[79]

> All the teachings taught by the Buddha can be summed up within two categories: (1) the exposition of Sūtra and Tantra, for the sake of removing erroneous imputations regarding the object of knowledge, and (2) the exposition of the sense of practical instructions received through an oral transmission, for the sake of impressing the sense upon the mind. From among those two, the first degenerates to the level of the cognitive image of an object-universal, its object of knowledge. By becoming delayed in that, one doesn't know how to impress it upon the mind and practice experientially. Because one does not know that, [the teaching] will not become the counteragent to the cognitive-emotional defilements and conceptual thinking. Therefore I will not expound [the first kind of teaching] here. The second type, namely the exposition of the sense of practical instructions received through an oral transmission, which is for the sake of impressing the sense upon the mind, is of two types: (a) instructions of provisional meaning, the gradualist path, and (b) the instructions of the definitive meaning, the path of the simultaneist.

Here, following widely established tradition, sGam-po-pa stresses the importance of direct, practical instructions (*man ngag*) as the sole means for applying the meaning or content of such teachings to the student's mind in a way that constitutes direct experience. Among such instructions, the "gradualist" (*rim gyis pa*) teaching is said there to be of

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[79] sGam-po-pa, Writings, vol. 1, p. 234.5: ...*sangs rgyas kyis gsungs pa'i chos thams cad kyang bsdu na rnam pa gnyis shes bya la sgro 'dogs gcod par bya ba'i phyir mdo rgyud kyi bshad pa dang/ de'ang don rgyud la bkal ba'i phyir/ snyan brgyud gdam ngag gi don bshad pa'o/ de ltar yang gnyis yod pa las dang po ni/ de shes bya don spyi'i rnam pa la shor/ de la 'gyangs pas rgyud thog tu bkal nas nyams su len ma shes/ de ma shes pas nyon mongs pa dang rnam par rtog pa'i gnyen por mi 'gro bar 'dus pas dang po mi ston/ gnyis pa/ rgyud la bkal ba'i phyir snyan brgyud kyi gdam ngag gi don bstan pa/ de la gnyis/* [d]*rang don gyi gdam ngag lam rim gyis pa dang/ nges pa don gyi gdam ngag lam cig car ba gnyis las/ dang po mi ston/* See also his *Tshogs chos bkra shis phun tshogs*, Writings, vol. 1, p. 150, where he states that for beginners to attain the awakening of Buddhahood, there are only the two: the Perfection and Mantra approaches: *las dang po pa'i gang zag cig sangs rgyas kyi sar 'gro ba la lam gnyis las med/ pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam dang/ gsang sngags kyi lam gnyis yin gsung/*

provisional meaning (*drang don*) requiring further explanation, while the "simultaneist" (*cig car ba*) is of final, definitive meaning (*nges don*). It was probably in a doctrinal context such as this that sGam-po-pa is said elsewhere to have proclaimed his (simultaneist) Great Seal instructions to be the highest of all possible doctrines, superior even to the three "greats" (*chen po gsum*): the Great [scholastic] Madhyamaka (*dbu ma chen po*), the [Vajrayāna] Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po*), and even the Great Perfection (*rdzogs pa chen po*).[80]

Classifications of Other Tibetan Schools

sGam-po-pa thus classified his highest Great Seal teachings as being, in a sense, outside the standard textually expounded Buddhist doctrines. And the claims he made about its superiority also applied with respect to all the other Tibetan religious traditions of his period. In his reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa, for instance, there is repeated a discussion between sGam-po-pa and the (bKa'-gdams-pa?) dge-bshes brGya-yon-bdag, who was displeased with the followers of the five main Tibetan religious traditions of his own day and who considered their followers to be like self-satisfied people who each savor the sweetness of their own candy. The traditions he listed were:[81]

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[80] The statement attributed to sGam-po-pa that his Great Seal method was distinct from and superior to the "three great [traditions]" (*chen po gsum*) is discussed by S. Karmay (1988), p. 197, based on its occurrence in the *dGongs gcig* commentary of rDo-rje-shes-rab, pp. 403-404 (which Karmay attributes to Shes-rab-'byung-gnas). The same quotation appears for instance in Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Legs bshad gser thur*, Collected Works, vol. 7, p. 84. Sum-pa mkhan-po said that such a threefold classification into the "Three Greats" was being maintained in his time by some who professed to follow Tsong-kha-pa, though Sum-pa himself rejected it. See S. C. Das ed. (1908), *dPag bsam ljon bzang*, p. 405. For further references to the "Three Greats" see also L. van der Kuijp (1983), pp. 33 and 275, n. 109.

[81] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*, p. 437.7: *dge bshes brgya yon bdag gi zhal nas/ bod na nom bu kha na mngar ba'i chos pa mang po yod de/ rdzogs pa chen* [438] *po zer ba cig yin* [delete: yin |]/ *nang rtogs na nang sangs rgyal nub rtogs na nub sangs rgyal zer ba tshan cig yod/ mtshan nyid pa zer ba cig/ cig dang du bral gyis gzhigs nas nga'i 'dis sangs rgya zer ba tshan cig yod/ pha rol tu phyin pa zer ba thabs dang shes rab la brten nas nga'i 'dis sangs rgya zer ba tshan cig yod/ sngags pa zer ba'i rtsa rlung dang thig le dang/ bskyed rdzogs la brten nas nga'i 'dis sangs rgya zer ba tshan cig yod/ bka' gdams pa zer ba'i skyes bu rab 'bring mam pa gsum la brten pa'i gdam ngag nga'i 'dis sangs rgya zer ba tshan cig yod de/ de tsho yo log nas ci byed nga la bzlos dang gsung/ de tsho yo log nas mi dge ba bcu dge ba bcur bsgyur ba las gzhan med gsung/.* sGam-po-pa advised him that if he did

1) rDzogs-chen-pa ("Followers of the Great Perfection")
2) mTshan-nyid-pa ("Definitionists"), who dissolve false conceptions through reasoning
3) Pha-rol-tu-phyin-pa ("Perfectionists", i.e. followers of the Pāramitās), who stress [skillful] means and wisdom
4) sNgags-pa ("Tantricists," followers of Mantrayāna ritual and meditative practice)
5) bKa'-gdams-pa ("Those Enjoined by Instructions"), whose special instructions utilize the threefold division of personality types into great, middling and lesser (following the tradition of Atiśa).

This enumeration does not include sGam-po-pa's own Great Seal, which anyway would be understood as surpassing them all (including, interestingly enough, even the Great Perfection, which here *is* enumerated). This list is significant for its separate specifications of the dialectical (i.e. "definitional"), the "Perfections," and the bKa'-gdams-pa approaches. Thus, though in sGam-po-pa's threefold classifications described above, the "Definitional" (*mtshan nyid*) and "Perfections" (*phar phyin*) approaches seem to be more or less synonymous, occasionally sGam-po-pa differentiates them, too, as he does here. The scholars who worked intensively with definitions and logical relations, i.e. the dialectically oriented scholars (*mtshan nyid pa*) in the gSang-phu-ba tradition of rNgog-lo (1059-1109) and Phywa-pa (1109-1169), were already by the mid-12th century recognized as a distinct and significant trend in the religious life of Tibet. sGam-po-pa in his reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa furthermore mentions the bKa'-gdams-pa, mTshan-nyid-pa and sNgags-pa masters as following meditative traditions quite distinct from his tradition of the Great Seal.[82] Likewise in a passage from one of his biographies, sGam-po-pa mentions the dialectician "mTshan-nyid-pas" as distinct from bKa'-gdams-pas proper, though pointing to a fundamental similarity in their approaches, namely asserting that theirs is a mentally constructed Emptiness.[83] sGam-po-pa claimed first-hand knowledge of

not like those religious traditions, there was nothing left for him to do besides practicing the transformation of the ten non-virtues into the ten virtues. For similar lists of other Tibetan traditions, see also 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Works, vol. 5, pp. 407.2 and 510.

[82] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum*, p. 453.3.

[83] sGam-po-pa, *Collected Works*, vol. 1, p. 112.5: *yang mtshan nyid pa'am bka' gdams pa ltar/ gzung 'dzin gnyis ka gzhi ma grub par skye med du byas nas/ snang ba sna tshogs dkar dmar 'di la yid kyis snang ba a cang che na/ mig gis kyang ma mthong bar chos thams*

the doctrines and practices of each of these traditions, and he considered his own approach to be distinct from and superior to them all; indeed, he proclaimed that the masters of the other traditions had no comprehension of his own meditation and insights, whereas he could understand theirs.[84]

cad nam mkha' mam par dag pa'i dkyil ltar gyur kyang/ de yang blos byas kyi stong pa shes bya'i gshis la shor ba bya ba yin te/.

[84] sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum*, p. 453.3. After quoting a verse from dGon-pa-ba stressing the need for actual experience, he says: "It's like that. I have knowledge about meditation. I know what you geshes of the bKa'-gdams-pa, teachers of the mTshan-nyid-pa, Mantra practitioners and so on cultivate in meditation. But you don't have any idea what I cultivate in meditation!" The Tibetan text: *de dang 'dra ste/ nga bsgom pa la cha yod pa yin/ bka' gdams pa'i dge bshes mams dang/ mtshan nyid pa'i ston pa mams dang/ sngags pa la sogs khyed cag ci bsgom nga la cha yod/ nga ci bsgom khyed cag la cha med//*



1. rJe sGam-po-pa bSod-nams-rin-chen

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CRITICISMS OF INTELLECTUAL METHODS BY SGAM-PO-PA AND HIS SCHOOL

sGam-po-pa and his followers' presentation of the Great Seal as the ultimate path was thus part of an approach based on and aiming at a special non-conceptual and direct cognition of reality. In it, an accomplished teacher attempted to open the eyes of the student to a direct perception of the mind as the ultimate, by directly and dramatically unveiling the innate wisdom that had been present all along but that had not been recognized until it was pointed out. This approach was also anti-intellectual, or more precisely, "anti-verbal" and "anti-conceptual." It sought to utilize non-conceptual experience directly and to short-circuit or circumvent the mind's rational and verbalizing processes that distance the experiencer from directly seeing ultimate reality. It necessarily discouraged intellectual investigation or reflection. In order to convey this point, and to stress the special nature and superiority of this radically different approach, sGam-po-pa and his followers sometimes derided or sharply dismissed other methods, especially intellectual ones. Buddhists who utilized rational means—i.e. the scholars or "paṇḍitas" who insisted on sound inferences and careful definitions of terms—became on these occasions objects for belittlement and sometimes even for withering scorn.

A mild example of such a rejection of intellectual methods is found in a reply sGam-po-pa made near the end of his life to his learned and accomplished Khams-pa disciple Phag-mo-gru-pa rDo-rje-rgyal-po. There sGam-po-pa spoke of the understanding he taught as being utterly beyond the range of intellectual understanding, being "unknown even by a greatly learned man or *paṇḍita*," saying that it only could arise through the grace of the teacher who transmitted it non-verbally:[85]

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[85] sGam-po-pa, *rJe phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan*, p. 471.7. See also M. Broido (1985), p. 15. For the complete Tibetan text, see below, Appendix A, part (1). He made a similar

> This is not known even by a learned paṇḍita. It is not understood by discriminative understanding (*prajñā*). It is not within the scope of the dialectician's activities. As for how this nature can be born within the mind: it arises without words, from [an experience] surpassing the [ordinary] mind, by the force of a sustaining spiritual power when the disciple has had faith and devotion toward a teacher who possesses realization. Its nature is free from any [conceptually framed] affirmation, even for the greatly learned scholars such as Nāgārjuna.

This doctrine is not far from the position taken in the "fruit" instructions of the "Thunderbolt Strike" (*thog babs*) in which the fourth of the five erroneous notions to be dispelled before the direct instruction are given is the idea that realization (*rtogs pa*) is reached through intelligence (*rig pa*) or discriminative understanding (*shes rab*), because in this system realization is said to be reached only through the teacher's direct, practical instruction (*gdams ngag*).[86] It is also similar to the basic Great Perfection theory, which maintains that realization consists of directly seeing—without conceptualization—the mind's primordial nature. To let intellect play any active role whatsoever would obscure the true nature further and would only go on increasing delusion through the fictive activities of conceptual thought.[87]

On the limitations of the "paṇḍita's" word- and concept-based approach, one can find similar statements in the *Tshogs chos chen mo*, a public sermon that was included in sGam-po-pa's collected works but not set down in its final form until some generations after sGam-po-pa by dPal Shes-rab-gzhon-nu:[88]

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point to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa. See his works, vol. 1, p. 453.5: *mkhas pa paṇḍi ta dang/ mkhan gyi mkhan po dang/ slob dpon dang/ stong 'khor los sgyur ba'i rgyal po la sogs pa 'di ma byas bya ba med de/....*

See also the Vairocanābhisambodhi Tantra (*rNam snang mngon byang*), Peking ed. *rgyud tha*, p. 241.5.1: *rtog ge kun gyis mi shes pa/ /.*

[86] See sGam-po-pa, *Chos rje dags po lha rje'i gsung/ thog babs kyi rtsa ba*, Works, vol. 2, pp. 215.7ff.

[87] See S. Karmay (1988), p. 175.

[88] *Tshogs chos chen mo*, p. 348.5 (re: *tha mal gyi shes pa*): *de rtogs na paṇḍita rig pa'i gnas lnga la mkhas pa bas kyang yon tan che/ paṇḍita ni don spyi'i rnam pa yul du byed/ sgra mtshan nyid du byed pa yin/ kun shes cig bdugs* [=rdugs?] *bya ba yin/ 'di rtogs na cig shes kun la mkhas pa bya ba yin/.* See also sGam-po-pa's works, vol. 1, p. 452.7, where he speaks of *cig shes kun la mkhas pa.* On the similar expression *cig shes kun grol*, see D. Jackson (1990), p. 38 and n. 34. An instruction in the Kālacakra cycle was similarly

[Regarding this "ordinary knowing" (*tha mal gyi shes pa*) of the Great Seal,] if one understands it, one has learned qualities (*yon tan: guṇa*) even greater than those of the paṇḍita who is a master of the five fields of knowledge. The paṇḍita takes the cognitive image of an "object-universal" (*don spyi*) as his cognitive object. He takes language as definitive. He is what is referred to as "knowing all, he is simply destitute."[89] When you understand the above, that is what is referred to as "knowing one, he is learned in all."

Phag-mo-gru-pa on Intellectual Methods

sGam-po-pa's disciple Phag-mo-gru-pa, to whom some of sGam-po-pa's above-mentioned answers were directed, later wrote a general graded Mahāyāna treatise entitled *Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la rim gyis 'jug pa'i tshul* "How to Enter into the Buddha's Doctrine by Stages."[90] Like sGam-po-pa's similar *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan* ("Ornament of the Jewel of Liberation"), it is a work in the *bstan rim* ("stages of the Doctrine") mold of rNgog lo-tsā-ba's school.[91] In it one also finds comments on the inadequacy of conceptualizing mind for apprehending the absolute (just as one finds in sGam-po-pa's "*Thar rgyan*").[92] Chapter ten of the work

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characterized. See Kun-dga'-grol-mchog, *Zhen pa rang grol*, p. 439.4 (*nga* 78a): *dus 'khor snyan brgyud kyi gdams pa gcig shes kun grol gyi nyams khrid chen mo ... (=yi ge med pa'i snyan brgyud).*

89 Read here: *rdugs* instead of *bdugs*.

90 Phag-mo-gru-pa, in addition to his studies under Sa-chen and sGam-po-pa, had studied many other traditions. See 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Collected Works, vol. 1 (*ka*), p. 295, where his studies are said to have included: *rdzogs chen/ zhi byed/ thun 'jug/ a ma na se gsang sngags kyi chags srol gnyis/ phyag rgya chen po'am dpal nā ro pa'i chos drug la sogs pa/.*

According to his disciple 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Phag-mo-gru-pa followed a dialectician-style of scholarship when utilizing topical outlines in his compositions, which 'Jig-rten-mgon-po compared with the practice of the great scholar gTsang-nag-pa, who used to compose many subject outlines. See 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Collected Works, vol. 1, pp. 284-5 (142b-143a).

91 On this genre of religious literature, see my article in *Tibetan Literature: Essays in Honor of Geshe Sopa* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, forthcoming).

92 Cf. sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos...*, p. 256.6 (128b): *dbu ma nyid du yang brtag tu* [129a] *med de/ don la der 'dzin gyi shes pa dang bral ba blo las 'das par gnas pa'o//*, p. 259.2 (130a) *de ltar shes rab bam/ rang sems shes par bya ba'i tshig de dag kyang/ rtog pas bcad*

has two main sections: A. the cultivation of a union of emptiness and compassion (*stong nyid snying rje dbyer med bsgom pa*) and B. the teaching of the fruit as being the attainment of the three "bodies" (*kāya*) (*'bras bu sku gsum thob par bstan pa*) (47a.6). Insight into the first can be established in three ways: 1. through reasoning (*rigs pas gtan la 'bebs pa*), 2. through the instructions of the guru (*bla ma'i gdams ngag gis...*), and 3. through scriptural quotation (*lung gis...*). The first two are not to be taught here, he says; only the last. Still, he utilizes concepts and distinctions developed within the Pramāṇa tradition of reasoning to reject the first and to establish the necessity of the second, namely the guru's instructions:[93]

> Since a theory derived from learning and reflection is [merely conceptual] understanding of the "object-universal," in order directly to understand the cognitive object as an "own-mark" [or "particular"], one needs to cultivate in meditation the orally transmitted practical instructions of the noble guru.

Phag-mo-gru-pa follows these comments with some quotations from the *dohas*, as sGam-po-pa had similarly done in his own general Mahāyāna treatise, the *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*, when teaching how to cultivate transcendent understanding.[94]

Bla-ma Zhang on Scholastics

sGam-po-pa's "grand-pupil" Zhang Tshal-pa (1123-1193) followed sGam-po-pa's ordering and classifying of doctrine when he wrote his best-known work, the *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug*, and he, too, often treated the Great Seal as the highest pinnacle of doctrines situated outside the normal approaches. But like sGam-po-pa before him, he was not perfectly consistent in all his writings. In some contexts, he presented the Great Seal as the highest instruction, but as still within the Mantrayāna,

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pa'i ngos nas yin la/ shes rab bam/ sems kyi don ni shes par bya ba'am/ brjod par bya ba las 'das pa yin no//. See also H. V. Guenther (1971), pp. 213 and 215.

[93] Phag-mo-gru-pa rDo-rje-rgyal-po, *Sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la rim gyis 'jug pa'i tshul*, 46b: *thos bsam gyi lta bas* [=ba?] *don spyi'i go ba yin pas/ don rang gi mtshan nyid mngon sum du rtogs pa la bla ma dam pa'i snyan brgyud kyi gdams ngag sgom dgos te/*.

[94] See sGam-po-pa, *Dam chos...*, p. 260.5 (130b) and H. V. Guenther (1971), pp. 216f.

no doubt reflecting his own extensive training and continuing participation also within the latter sphere.

Bla-ma Zhang, too, was aware of certain basic doctrinal parallels between the Great Seal and the Great Perfection, and like sGam-po-pa, he sometimes classified the two instructions as on the same level or belonging to the same class of teaching. Though I have not been able to trace any record of formal studies of the Great Perfection by Zhang, he was definitely familiar with it, and just as sGam-po-pa did, he viewed it as having a fundamental similarity with the Great Seal—the two occupying in his opinion the parallel ultimate positions within the New and Old Tantric teachings.[95] He discusses this at some length in his instructions to the (bKa'-gdams-pa?) teacher "Mal the White-headed" (Mal dbu-dkar), where in contrast with the bKa'-gdams-pa teachings and the Madhyamaka reasonings and meditations that take devoted conviction as their path, involving merely the cognitive image of an "object universal" (*don spyi'i rnam pa tsam las mos pa yul du byed pa*), the Great Seal and Great Perfection are said to be tantric paths of the guru's sustaining spiritual power or "blessing."[96] In this, Zhang agreed with certain statements of sGam-po-pa, who as cited above on some occasions portrayed the Great Seal and Great Perfection as occupying a similar doctrinal position within the Mantrayāna, and indeed as being in some sense identical.[97]

Bla-ma Zhang furthermore criticized intellectual thought processes in principle (especially in the context of meditation on the absolute), and in this he is traditionally said to have been strongly influenced by his teacher sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po. According to 'Gos lo-tsā-ba's *Blue Annals*, Zhang met sGom-pa at age 32 (in ca. 1155) and received then

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[95] As will be discussed below, he did have visions of receiving Great Perfection instructions from early masters such as Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, and these were recorded in his "Sealed book of 'Chims-phu" (*'Chims phu bka' rgya ma*). See dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, (New Delhi 1959 ed.) part 1, p. 186.

[96] Zhang, *Mal dbu dkar la gdams pa*, Writings, p. 654.7f: *phyag rgya chen po dang/ rdzogs pa chen po la sogs pa sngags gsar rnying mthar thug rnams kyang/ gsang sngags byin brlabs kyi* [655] *lam yin pa la/*.

[97] Cf. the later scholar sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal's similar tantric characterization of the Great Perfection as "[a doctrine authoritatively] maintained to be the ultimate of Mantra teachings, the 'Atiyoga.'" See bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, sGam-po spyan-snga, p. 93b.6; L. Lhalungpa transl., p. 105. The Tibetan text: *rdzogs chen ni a ti yo ga zhes pa gsang sngags kyi mthar thug tu bzhed pa.*

from him the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor* Great Seal instructions.[98] After cultivating this insight in meditation, the power of Zhang's intellectual understanding increased, and he had the feeling that he could understand the sense of many individual words from the scriptures. When he reported this to sGom-pa, the latter replied: "All that is what is called 'investigative knowing' (*brtag dpyad kyi shes pa*). Meditate without investigating! This teaching of mine puts its hope in the sustaining spiritual impulse [of the teacher]." When Zhang meditated accordingly, then for the first time he distinctly perceived the ultimate nature of all entities.[99] Later in his life when he spoke of how sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po transmitted these teachings to him, Zhang stated: "In general, there arose distinctly in my mind the spontaneously and innately born [Great Seal] through this noble, holy person, purely by means of a sustaining spiritual impulse that did not rely upon words,..."[100]

It is not surprising, then, that Zhang as a mature master was not very concerned with words, terms or concepts. That he also had no great love for the methods and fine distinctions of the scholiast or logician can also be easily seen from remarks he made in his *Lam mchog mthar thug*

[98] This date is perhaps two years too late, because sGam-po-pa, who died in 1153, is said to have been still alive during Zhang's first visit to sGam-po. The other possibility is that Zhang did not receive these teachings from sGom-pa until somewhat later.

[99] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *Deb ther sngon po*, p. 623.7-624.1 (*nya*, 137a-b). See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 104. Cf. the translation of G. Roerich, p. 714. See also Zhang's account in his *Shes rab grub ma* autobiography, p. 40 (20a): *slob dpon la zhus pas/ gsol ba drag du thob/ nged kyis* [=kyi] *'di byin brlabs la re ba yin/ de ring phyag rgya chen po cig bya dgos gsung nas/ phyag rgya chen po'i gdams ngag gnang nas de la sgom pas sems ma bcos pas nam mkha' lta bu'i ngang las/ ye shes kyi me mched/ de tsug 'dug de tsug 'dug/ de tsug yin snyam pa rong rong byung/ slob dpon la zhus pas/ rtags spyad* [=brtag dpyad] *ma mdzad/ rtags spyad kyis sgrib pa yin gsung pa dang/ yang bsgom pas sngar bzhin shes rab mang po rong rong byung ba de la brtag spyad du 'dug/ de'i rjes su ma 'brang bar klong kyin bzhugs pas/ rtog*[s] *pa lhag gis shar/*. Cf. The account in the *rGyal blon ma* biography, Writings, p. 270.5ff. There (p. 271.7) the sentence occurs: *shes rab dang/ brtag phyad (=dpyad) thams cad rtog pa 'ba' zhig tu 'dug/*.

[100] Zhang, Writings, p. 557: *spyir skyes bu dam pa 'dis/ tshig la ma rten pa'i byin brlabs 'ba' zhig gis/ kho bo'i rgyud la lhan cig skyes pa lhag gis shar bas....*

treatise, which he composed apparently in the 1160s.[101] He clarified in one passage the doctrinal basis for this non-verbal and non-investigative approach:[102]

> An assemblage of words—no matter how profoundly expressed, and even though expressed numerous times—cannot possibly alight upon the ultimate reality [inherent in] the mind.
> Critical investigation—however skillful and profound it may be, even though expressed for many limitless aeons—cannot possibly understand the ultimate reality [inherent] in mind because the original nature is not an object for investigative thought.
> For example, even if you [try to] filter out the planets and stars that appear on the ocean's surface, no matter how excellent a silk filter you may use, you cannot possibly catch even a single planet or star because those planets and stars do not exist as objectively apprehendable entities.
> For however long it is expressed in words, no matter how excellent your terminology, that is not the ultimate reality. For however long it is amenable to mental investigation, no matter how profoundly you

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[101] His composition of this work is mentioned in his biography *rGyal blon ma*, Writings, p. 284.7.

[102] Zhang, *Lam zab mthar thug*, 747.6 (*nga* 2b):
ji tsam zab pa'i brjod pa'i tshig tshogs kyis// rnam grangs du mar brjod par byas gyur kyang//
sems kyi gnas lugs thog tu phebs mi srid//
ji tsam mkhas shing zab pa'i brtag dpyad kyis// bskal pa dpag med mang por brjod byas kyang//
rang bzhin gnyug ma brtag pa'i yul min phyir// sems kyi gnas lugs rtogs pa mi srid do//
dper na rgya mtshor shar ba'i gza' skar de// dar tshag ji tsam bzang bas btsags byas kyang//
gza' skar dngos po dmigs su med [3a] *pa'i phyir// gza' skar gcig kyang zin pa mi srid do//*
ji srid tshig tu brjod pa de srid du// ming 'dogs ji tsam legs rung gnas lugs min//
ji srid yid kyis dpyad bzod de srid du// ji tsam zab par rtogs kyang gnas lugs min//
blta bya lta byed gnyis 'dzin de srid du// gnyis su med pa'i gnas lugs rtogs mi srid//
mdor na yin snyam mtha' dag zhen pa'i rtsa// zhen pa'i rtsa bas 'khor ba mtha' dag spel//
ji tsam zab cing stong par 'du shes kyang// rlom sems mtshan ma dag las ma g.yos pas//
mtshan ma'i zhen pas phyir zhing dman par lhung//
blos byas lta ba mkhan gyi sgom chen rnams// phyogs 'dzin zhen pa'i nad gcong zhugs par mchis//
snyem bral lhan cig skyes par mkhyen par mdzod//

> understand it, that is not the ultimate reality.
> For however long there is bifurcation into "thing to be viewed" and "viewer," you will not understand the non-dual ultimate reality.
> In brief, all thoughts of "It is" are the roots of conceptual attachment.
> By the root of conceptual attachment, the whole of cyclic existence is made to grow.
> However profound and empty you may conceive [something] to be, it will later on fall down through attachment to phenomenal marks, since that does not go beyond hypostatizing thoughts and phenomenal marks.
> Those "great meditators" who utilize theories that have been fashioned by intellect are afflicted by the chronic disease of conceptual attachment that postulates positions [through partiality]. Be free from pride, and know [reality] to be the simultaneously and innately born!

And below:[103]

> Having thus understood, you will not be obscured [?] by terms and groups of words, and you will not be touched by the fault of words. Therefore, do not employ words and critical investigation, and don't have attachment through falsely imagining [them] to be the point!

A bit later, Zhang returns to the same themes:[104]

> However skilled you may be at considering and investigating words, it is impossible to understand ultimate reality through intellectual investigation, for it has not been experientially practiced and has not arisen from within. [If] you do not realize the real state of things, your karmic tendencies will not be purified. Therefore don't be attached to words or to the discriminative understanding of dialectics! Practice the instructions of the master!

Zhang did, however, qualify his rejection of words. Ultimate reality does

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[103] *Ibid.*, p. 748.6:
de ltar shes na tha snyad tshig tshogs kyis// sgrib [?] *par mi 'gyur tshig gi skyon mi gos// de phyir tshig dang brtag dpyad mi slang zhing// don tu rlom pas zhen pa yang mi bya//*

[104] *Ibid.*,p. 752:
ji tsam tshig la mno zhing dpyod mkhas kyang// nyams su ma blangs nang nas ma shar bas//
blo yi brtags pas gnas lugs rtogs mi srid// gnas lugs ma rtogs bag chags 'byong mi srid//
de phyir tshig dang rtog ge'i shes rab la// ma zhen bla ma'i gdams ngag nyams su long//

have a special relation to verbal expression, as he had explained in a preceding passage:

> It is not established as a word, it cannot be conveyed through a statement. [But] it is not completely removed from words; it is the basis of all expressions.[105]

The technique taught by Zhang nevertheless did devalue discursive thought, and it sought to avoid critical, analytical thinking. But it certainly did *not* recommend the forceful stoppage of all discursive thoughts. Such a conscious blockage was seen as both unnecessary and counterproductive:[106]

> Ignorant people who do not possess the true practical instructions and lack any karmic carry-over from previous practice make twofold divisions, such as into "issued forth" and "not issued forth," conceptual thought and non-conceptualizing, or [ordinary] mind and Dharmakāya. They view discursive thought as a fault and stop it. They desire non-conceptualizing and purposefully try to achieve it. You will never finish sweeping away waves with a broom.
> Non-conceptualizing that arrests conceptual thought is itself a deluded conceptual thought. It is a great darkness that obscures the Dharmakāya. Without a lot of hurried investigations, relax loosely and concentrate firmly.

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[105] *Ibid.*, p. 747.4:
tshig tu ma grub brjod pas bsnyad du med// tshig bral ma yin brjod pa kun gyi gzhi//

[106] *Ibid.*, p. 756.7:
gdams ngag gsha' mas ma zin cing// sbyangs pa'i 'phro med rmongs pa'i mis//
'phros pa dang ni ma 'phros pa// rtog pa dang ni mi rtog dang// [757]
sems dang chos sku gnyis su phye// rnam rtog skyon du bltas shing bkag//
mi rtog 'dod cing ched du sgrub// chu rlabs phyags pas phyir mi 'khyongs//
rtog pa bkag pa'i mi rtog pa// de nyid rnam rtog 'khrul pa ste//
chos skur sgrib pa'i mun chen yin//
brtag dpyad tsab tsub ma mang bar// lhod kyis glod la tseṇ gyis zhog//
'di yin snyam pa gang byung yang// dmigs zhen sa bon thebs pa yin//
rloms sems myu gu skyes gyur na// 'khor ba'i sdong po 'phel bar mchi'o//
sems nyid ye dag 'od gsal las [=la]*// sgom pa'i mun pas ma sgribs shig//*
sems nyid me long g.ya' med la// bsam gtan dri mas ma byugs shig//
ye shes gzugs brnyan mi mthong ngo//
sems nyid nor bu rin chen 'di// mtshan ma'i 'jim pas ma gtum shig//
'bras bu dgos 'dod 'gags par mchi'o//
mdor na yin snyam med par zhog// ma yin snyam pa med par [758] *zhog//*
yin snyam sems dang min snyam sems// phan tshun ltos pa'i 'dzin pa yin//

Whatever thoughts of "It is this" may arise, [in this] there are planted the seeds of objectifying and attachment. If the sprout of mind that falsely hypostatizes should arise, the tree of cyclic existence will grow.
Don't obscure the originally pure luminescence of Mind Itself with the darkness of meditative cultivation.
Don't wipe the impurity of meditative concentration on the spotless mirror of the Mind Itself. You'll not see the reflection of gnosis [reflected within it].
Don't encase this precious jewel of the Mind Itself within the mud of phenomenal marks. This will obstruct [all] needed and desired fruits.
In brief, concentrate without the thought, "It is." Concentrate without the thought "It is not." The thoughts "It is" and "It is not" are mutually dependent postulations.

In a subsequent passage, Zhang discusses the arising of the Gnosis or "realization" (*rtogs pa*), and the complete stopping of discursive thoughts:[107]

That dawning of the Gnosis of realization does not arise because of hopes and desires. It won't occur through being skilled in critical investigation. It won't occur through great learning. It is beyond the range of a dialectician.
However thick or vast it may be, that non-discursiveness that stops discursive thought is a great obscuration to the birth of Gnosis.
That secondarily occurring Gnosis of realization does not arise from

[107] *Ibid.*, p. 759.3:
rtogs pa'i ye shes shar ba de// a re 'dod kyis 'char ba min//
brtags dpyad mkhas pas 'ong pa min// thos pa ches bas 'ong pa min//
rtog ge pa yi spyod yul min//
rtog pa bkag pa'i mi rtog pa// ji tsam 'thug cing tshan che yang//
ye shes skye ba'i sgrib chen yin//
rtogs pa'i ye shes shugs 'byung de// a re 'dod dang glod pa dang//
brtag dpyad mkhas dang mi mkhas dang// thos pa che dang chung ba dang//
nyams myong bzang dang ngan pa dang// rtsol ba drag dang zhan la sogs//
gang gis kyang ni mi 'char ste// bla ma'i dus thabs bsten pa dang//
bdag gi bsod nams las shes bya//
bla ma'i dus thabs bsten zhes bya// rtogs ldan bla ma brnyes pa yi//
byin brlabs stobs kyis 'char ba yin//
bdag gi bsod nams zhes pa ni// sbyangs pa'i 'phro can rnams la 'char//
de phyir rtogs pa'i ye shes de// byin brlabs lam la gnas pa'i phyir//
dad pa can gyi spyod yul yin// gus pa can la 'char ba yin//
sbyangs pa can gyis rtogs pa yin// kun gyi grogs ni brtson 'grus yin//
skal ldan dbang po rab kyis mthong// tshig mkhan rnams kyis blor mi shong//

> any such things as hopeful expectation or letting go, from being skilled in critical examination or not being skilled, from great learning or inferior learning, from excellent [yogic] experience or poor, or from strong effort or weak.
> "It is known through carrying out the timely sacrifices for the guru, and from one's own merit." "Carrying out the timely sacrifices for the guru" means that it will arise through the power of the sustaining spiritual impulse resulting from having pleased a master who possesses realization.
> "One's own merit" means that it will arise in those who possess some karmic carry-over from previous practice.
> Therefore that Gnosis of realization, since it is grounded on the path of [the master's] sustaining spiritual impulse, is within the range of those who possess faith. It will arise in those who are respectful. It will be understood by those who have [previously trained themselves through having] practiced. The universal helper [for attaining it] is diligent effort.
> It will be seen by those fortunate ones of superior faculties. It won't be fathomed by verbalizers.

The lines quoted by Zhang: "It is known through carrying out the timely sacrifices for the guru, and from one's own merit," originate from the *Hevajra Tantra* (I viii 36) and were used by sGam-po-pa in a similar context.[108]

Some four folios later, Zhang summarizes several of the same points:[109]

> That Nirvāṇa in which one does not station oneself anywhere (in either Saṃsāra or Nirvāṇa) is within the range of direct realization alone. That non-duality fabricated by intellect will be understood by

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[108] sGam-po-pa, *rJe phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan*, p. 471 (236a), as translated and discussed below in Appendix A, (1).

[109] Zhang, *Lam zab mthar thug*, p. 768.1:
mi gnas mya ngan 'das pa de// rtogs pa kho na'i spyod yul yin//
blo yis byas pa'i gnyis med de// thos pa che bas rtogs 'gyur te//
rtog pa kho na'i spyod yul yin//
nang nas shar ba'i gnyis med 'di// bla ma'i byin brlabs 'ba' zhig yin//
dpal ldan bla ma la gus te// nang nas rtogs pa'i nges shes skye//
brtags dpyad mkhan la ci cha yod// tshig tu shes pa ngas kyang shes//
rkyen ngan thub bam mi thub brtag//

> those of great learning, and it is within the range of conceptual thought alone. This non-duality that arises from within is purely the spiritual impulse of the Master. Paying respect to the Glorious Master, the definitive knowledge of realization will be born from within.
> What understanding does a critical investigator have? I, too, know verbal knowledge. Check [yourself] whether [that kind of knowledge] is proof against adverse circumstances or not!

And a bit later:[110]

> Nowadays religious people, though they are learned in a mass of words, do not understand the meaning. In general, pride and disputation increases.
> The reverend masters of the practice-lineage practiced following the meaning. Completely abandoning pride, etc., they realized the sense and fulfilled the intention of scripture and reasoning.
> Tilopa did not speak even a single word to Nāropa, but all scripture, reasoning and instruction without exception were brought to perfection in Nāropa's mind![111]

Other Criticisms of Conceptual Methods by Zhang

In other writings, bla-ma Zhang's criticisms of intellectual methods and scholastics sometimes became even more exuberant, and occasionally they took the form of sharp personal digs at the alleged spiritual shortcomings of his scholar opponents. In one of his autobiographical writings, written sometime in the last three decades of his life, Zhang mentions opponents who call his teaching an erroneous or perverse doctrine (*log chos*), while imagining themselves to be learned, though they merely mouth words uncomprehendingly like parrots. These types of people should not be

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[110] *Ibid.*, p. 776:
deng sang dus na chos pa rnams// tshig tshogs mkhas kyang don ma rtogs//
spyir la nga rgyal rtsod pa 'phel//
sgrub brgyud bla ma rje btsun rnams// don gyi rjes su 'brangs te sgrub//
nga rgyal la sogs gtan spangs te// don rtogs lung rigs dgongs pa rdzogs//
tai lo pas ni nā ro pa la// tshig gcig tsam yang ma gsungs te//
lung rigs man ngag thams cad kun// ma lus nā ro'i thugs la rdzogs//

[111] The great Indian Tantric adept Tilopa and his disciple Nāropa are usually counted as the main source for the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud.

associated with or told about this special Great Seal teaching, he says, and this is for their own good. Otherwise, if those opponents reject and condemn the teaching after hearing about it, the consequences for them will be most grievous:[112]

> Don't associate with those who, [being] of dull faculties, have not accumulated the preparatory spiritual equipment, have not studied under a spiritual teacher, are confused by the delusion of subject and object, and who mouth words with their tongue like a parrot—externally oriented sorts of people who do not know their own nature, and who are unsuitable for the hearing or own-seeing of the "self-seen" things, whose minds cannot fathom the correct, profound reality because they insistently believe in only [the surface meaning of] those words that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas have spoken with hidden intention, and who therefore call this "a perverse doctrine that does not accord with the real content of the Dharma," and who thus reject and revile the definitive meaning! Don't mix with such confused ones, who imagine themselves to be learned—don't send them to hell!

Later in the same work, Zhang specified logicians or dialecticians (*rtog ge pa*) as the ones he was criticizing:[113]

> This innate possession of the Dharmakāya by oneself is not within the range of dialecticians who falsely imagine themselves to be learned, mouthing words with their tongues while never having meditated, those glib ones infatuated with only external critical investigations, those obstinate ones who maintain a falsely imagined learnedness for what is in fact their own minds being rigid and oppressed by the great

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[112] Zhang, *rNam thar shes rab grub ma*, Writings, p. 50.1: *dbang po gtul* [=rtul] *po'i tshogs ma bsags cing/ bla ma ma rten* [=bsten] *pas/ gzung 'dzin gyi mun pas 'thom shing/ ne tsho ltar tshig lce sbyong ba'i gang zag/ kha phyir ltas pa'i mi rigs/ rang ngo ma shes shing/ rang mthong ba rnams kyis* [=kyi?] *rang mthong du mi rung/ thos su mi rung/ sangs rgyas dang/ byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyis* [=kyi?]*/ ldem por dgongs pa'i tshigs* [sic] *rnams 'ba' zhig la a 'thas pas/ zab mo'i don phyin ci log pa rnams blor mi shong zhing/ 'di chos kyi babs dang mi 'thun log chos yin zer nas/ nges don spong zhing bskur ba 'debs pa'i gang zag/ gti mug can mkhas su re ba rnams dang kha ma 'brel khong dmyal bar ma bskyur/*. The text, which is based on an old manuscript, is quite corrupt.

[113] *Ibid.*, p. 52.2: *chos kyi sku rang nyid rang chas su yod pas 'di rtog ge pa sgom ma myong pa'i tshig la lce sbyangs pa'i mkhas su re/ kha sbyang po phyi rol gyi brtag spyad 'bar zhing* [='ba' zhig?] *la blo song ba/ rang gi rgyud rengs shing nyon mongs pa rang rgyud du shor ba'i gti mug chen pos non pa la/ mkhas su rer khas len pa'i gyong po/ zhen pa'i sgrogs* [=sgrog] *tu tshud pa rnams kyi spyod yul ma yin no/.*

confusion of the defilements becoming [for them substantially real and] self-constituted, those ones who are caught within the bonds of desire!

Zhang addressed the same opponents in a versified work entitled *sNa tshogs zhi gnas*:[114]

[This] will not be fathomed by those tongue-users who are conceited about what is a mere object of [conceptual] understanding [accessible] through their critical investigations of mere [minor] experience and mere words, through the bustle (?) of mere purposeful effort. Having concealed [this truth] through their own evil thoughts, they acquire great demerit.

These criticisms by bla-ma Zhang show that his rejection of the scholastic methods was not done out of ignorance.[115] Indeed, he had also studied scholastic treatises as a young man before shifting his main interest first to Tantric practices and then to the Great Seal. His comments accordingly embody a shrewd usage of the concepts and doctrines by which the conceptual, rational approach can be countered. Yet in general it vexed him to have to try to express his own realizations

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[114] Zhang, *sNa tshogs zhi gnas*, Writings, p. 623.3:
rtsol sgrub rkyang pa'i phrad phrud kyis// tshig rkyang nyams rkyang brtags spyad kyis//
go yul rkyang pas nga rgyal ba'i// lce mkhan rnams kyis [?] *blor mi shong//*
rang rtog ngan pas bkab byas nas// shin tu sdig pa bsags par mchi'o//
The text is corrupt, though the general sense is clear.

[115] See also Zhang, *Lam zab mthar thug*, pp. 3b and 34a.5. The denial of the value or importance of words in the transmission of doctrine was addressed and rejected by Sa-paṇ in his *sDom gsum rab dbye*, p. 303.3.2 (*na* 14a): "Some say we do not need and should reject the profound words and meanings of the scriptures of the perfectly awakened Buddha and the extremely well expressed teachings of the accomplished adepts and learned scholars, because these are partial approximations (*na ya* = *na yam*[s]) through words."
la la rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi// gsung rab tshig don zab mo dang//
grub thob rnams dang mkhas rnams kyi// shin tu legs par bshad pa'i chos//
tshig gi na ya yin pas na// dgos pa med pas dor zhes zer//....
Go-rams-pa in his commentary *sDom pa gsum...rnam bshad*, p. 152.2, identifies those holding this opinion as "Zhang Tshal-pa and some followers of the bKa'-brgyud Great Seal" (*zhang tshal pa dang/ bka' phyag pa la la*). Cf. the description of this tradition by Kun-dga'-grol-mchog in his autobiography, p. 481 (*nga* 576): *tshig gi na yams la don 'tshol ba'i brgyud pa ma yin/ don dang don lhan cig tu sbyor ba'i brgyud pa yin pa'i phyir/ chos tshul 'di la phyag rgya chen po lhan cig skyes sbyor ces nyi zla ltar grags so//*. Here Kun-dga'-grol-mchog refers to both Sūtra- and Tantra-based Great Seal.

in words. Committing his insights to writing also brought him no great satisfaction, but rather frustration or regret in the end.[116]

[116] In a brief poem written at Bral-dro'i Mon-pa-gdong, he lists his main writings and where he composed them, concluding on a regretful note. See his Writings, pp. 600.1-601.1. The works he lists there are: (1) *rNal 'byor lam ring*; 2) *Phyag rgya chen po 'tshang 'bru* (both at Bhe-brag?); (3) *Bum pa'i 'phreng ba*, at Gong-dkar-mo; (4) *Cal cal ring mo*, at 'Brog-bu lkug-pa; (5) *gNyen po yig chung*, at Bya mKhar-rtse; (6) *Mas 'dzeg go rim*, at Yud-bu'i gad-pa; (7) *gSang sngags lag len*, at sTod-lung mTshur; (8) *Kha 'thor sna tshogs*, at Byang Byi-'brong; (9) *Lam mchog mthar thug*, at Thul-gyi-brag; and (10) *Kha na 'thon tshad* at Mon-pa-gdong. A more complete listing of Zhang's works is given by Padma-dkar-po in his record of teachings received, *bKa' brgyud kyi bka' 'bum...*, Works, vol. 4, pp. 453-456 (*nga na* 73a-74b).



2. Bla-ma Zhang g.Yu-brag-pa

3

BLA-MA ZHANG AND EARLY CRITICS OF THE GREAT SEAL

It was inevitable that such a decidedly anti-rational and anti-scholastic doctrine would attract the attention of the dialectically and textually oriented scholars it criticized so sharply. In fact, certain Great Seal doctrines had been the subject of critical discussion among Tibetan scholars even from an early stage in the revival of scholastic studies during the incipient "Latter-Spread of Buddhism" (*phyi dar*) period of Tibetan history.[117] Resistance to similar teachings is said to have gone back to at least the early-12th century, and in a general way perhaps even a generation or two earlier.[118] For instance, the bKa'-gdams-pa tradition beginning with the master 'Brom-ston rGyal-ba'i-'byung-gnas (1005-1064) is said from the start to have objected to the Great Seal's being taught ('Brom-ston was concerned in general about the suitability of Tantra-based doctrines for the Tibetans),[119] and later some bKa'-gdams-pas took a more neutral attitude of non-approval, saying the Great Seal should neither be practiced nor criticized.[120]

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[117] Sa-paṇ was thus by no means the first to question the origins and validity of certain Great Seal teachings followed in the Dwags-po bka'-brgyud, though that has been a common misconception (see, for instance, L. Lhalungpa [1986], pp. 434f, n. 73).

[118] Cf. the criticisms of the Great Perfection by those who "know grammar and reasoning," as mentioned by the 11th-century scholar Rong-zom, *Theg pa chen po'i*, p. 315.1.

[119] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba relates in the *Blue Annals* that although Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (ca. 982-1054) had begun to teach Maitrīpāda's Great Seal, 'Brom-ston opposed its teaching. See G. Roerich, transl., pp. 843-4 (*da* 3a-b). See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1273, n. 98. Prior to this there had been official restrictions imposed on the practice of Tantra. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 130.

[120] See 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, the *Blue Annals*, G. Roerich, transl., pp. 268 (*ca* 13b), where the early bKa'-gdams-pa dge-bshes Po-to-ba Rin-chen-gsal is reported to have said the Great Seal agreed in sense with the Samādhirāja Sūtra, but that it should be neither criticized nor

In the middle of the 12th century, too, the approach of sGam-po-pa and that of his successor sGom-tshul are said to have been singled out for criticism by others, whose numbers included dialectically trained scholars (*mtshan nyid pa*), i.e. probably followers of the gSang-phu Ne'u-thog tradition. sGam-po-pa in particular is said to have incurred the criticism of certain great scholars of scholasticism and Buddhist philosophy because of his introducing young monks directly into the Great Seal insight without their having received any prior religious educational training, and thus for "wasting" many bright young monks.[121] The great scholastic master Gro-lung-pa (fl. early 1100s) of rNgog-lo's home seminary gSang-phu Ne'u-thog is also said to have criticized certain *amanasikāra* doctrines of Maitrīpāda[122] as not being the Madhyamaka, which the later bKa'-brgyud-pas took to be the starting point for various criticisms of their central doctrines by Sa-paṇ and a number of bKa'-gdams-pas.[123] sGom-tshul, too, was criticized by some [scholars?] who had never met him but who had nevertheless berated him from afar, as alluded to in a verse of praise said to have been composed in his honor by gTsang-nag-pa (d. 1171), one of Phywa-pa's main students.[124]

Thus, by the mid-to-late 12th century, these doctrines and their upholders had already come to be criticized, notably by dialectically trained scholars (*rtog ge pa* or *mtshan nyid pa)* who in that period in

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practiced. See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1273, n. 98.

[121] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *Deb ther sngon po* (*Blue Annals*), p. 460; Tibetan text p. 400.5 = *nya* 25b: *thos bsam sngon du ma song ba'i btsun chung mang po yang rtogs pa la bkod pas/ mtshan nyid pa'i dge ba'i bshes gnyen chen po 'ga' zhig gis/ blo gsal mang po sgam po pas chud zos su bcug ces 'bar ba la/ gsung gis/ mtshan nyid pa rnams nga la bka' bkyon te*/....

[122] The Indian adept Maitrīpāda was another main source for the traditions of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud. For a sketch of what the traditional biographical sources tell us about him, see M. Tatz (1987).

[123] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1257, translating Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, p. 11 (6a.2): *lugs 'di dbu mar 'chad pa la rigs par smra ba gro lung pa sogs dpyod ldan mang pos ma rangs nas a ma na si pa sogs ci rigs kyi lugs dbu ma pa'i lugs dang mi mthun zhes 'gogs par mdzad la/ tshig 'di tsam la brten nas sa skya paṇ chen dang/ bka' gdams pa ci rigs pa zhig gis/ rje btsun mai tri pa'i chos rnam par dag pa a ma na sa'i skor thams cad la sdang zhen byed pa dang*/. See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 110-11, and n. 212, where the location of Gro-lung-pa's discussion is cited as: *bDe bar gshegs pa'i bstan pa rin po che la 'jug pa'i lam gyi rim pa rnam par bshad pa (bsTan rim)*, f. 377a-b.

[124] See the *Blue Annals*., p. 465; Tibetan p. 405 = *nya* 28a.2: *skal med skye bo ring med ngan brjod kyang*//.

Central Tibet probably belonged to the circle of Phywa-pa Chos-kyi-seng-ge (1109-1169) and his disciples or successors, i.e. to the gSang-phu Ne'u-thog tradition. But as just mentioned, the criticisms were not unanimous. The great scholar gTsang-nag brTson-'grus-seng-ge, for instance, is said to have renounced such negative preconceptions after meeting sGom-tshul personally. Moreover, a bKa'-gdams-pa dge-bshes who honored sGom-tshul was Phyag-sor-ba.[125]

If even the pacific and saintly sGam-po-pa and sGom-tshul-ba were so criticized, then it goes without saying that the more tumultuous and outrageous bla-ma Zhang Tshal-pa would be. Zhang himself reacted bitterly to criticisms of his teachings in one of the autobiographical works that he seemingly wrote in 1166, the *rNam thar shes rab grub ma*.[126] There he mentioned the criticisms of others who doubted that certain claims of the Great Seal doctrine under discussion were possible, and who in this way abandoned the Buddhist Teaching (*'di mi srid zer nas/ dam pa'i chos spong du 'ong pa yin*). But he had tried to demonstrate the reverse by quoting statements from a Tantra and from the songs of Saraha, and he then replied himself: "As for whether it is possible or not, look at the mind!" (*srid dam mi srid pa sems la ltos/*). He goes on (p. 50.1) to belittle and dismiss such opposing scholars, saying (as translated above) that they were not to be associated with, since by their erroneous hostility to the profound teachings they would go to hell.

In the above-mentioned "Instruction to Mal the White-haired" (*Mal dbu dkar la gdams pa*), a work evidently addressed to an old religious scholar (*dge bshes*) of a non-bKa'-brgyud-pa tradition (presumably of the bKa'-gdams-pa) who had asked him to be frank, Zhang also mentioned those who were strongly repelled by his doctrine of a sudden awakening that arises from within through the guru's grace (which he admits can occur only very rarely), and who were especially bothered by the notion that this alone was the decisive thing.[127] Zhang's defence of this doctrine is another clear indication that there did exist critics before Sa-

[125] See *ibid.*, p. 456; *nya* 28a.2.

[126] Zhang, *rNam thar shes rab grub ma*, p. 49.3. For the dating of this work I follow the suggestion of Dr. Dan Martin.

[127] Zhang, *Mal dbu dkar la gdams pa*, Writings, p. 657.5: *'di cig phu yin zer ba 'di shin tu mi 'thad zer nas/ [s]kyug log log song ba mang du byung/ da sun nas dang po zer ba 'di 'tsher ba gda'/ dge bshes pa nyid kyi gsung nas ngo bsrung ma byed gsungs pas drang por bgyis pa lags//.*

paṇ's time who had singled out the notion of soteriological self-sufficiency for rejection.

Bla-ma Zhang Tshal-pa's Studies and Later Career

In order to understand better the role of bla-ma Zhang and his tradition in these controversies, a little more should be said about his background and his career as a religious master and adept.[128] Zhang brTson-'grus-grags was born in 1123 at Tsha-ba-gru in sKyid-shod in Central Tibet, the son of a mantra lay-practitioner sNgags-'chang rDo-rje-sems-dpa' of the sNa-nam Zhang clan. He was an energetic and forceful person who in his youth and young adulthood put himself through a demanding series of studies and training under numerous outstanding masters from diverse doctrinal lineages. From the age of six to twenty-three his studies included investigations of the main Buddhistic doctrinal systems accessible to him: Prajñāpāramitā, Abhidharma, Pramāṇa, and the Tantras. (He also devoted some years to the practice of black magic.) At the age of twenty-five (ca. 1148) he took full monastic ordination in Khams from the mkhan-po mKhar-sgo-pa and the slob-dpon Grab-mkhar-ba, and it was then that he received the name brTson-'grus-grags.

In all, he studied under a total of thirty-six (or even forty-five) teachers, from among whom he considered these four as most important:

(1) rGwa lo-tsā-ba (a disciple of rTsa-mi)
(2) Mal Yer-pa-ba (a disciple of Gling-kha-ba)
(3) dNgul-chu Be-ro-ba (the Indian yogi Vairocanavartula, a disciple of Surapāla)
(4) rJe sGom-tshul (a nephew and disciple of sGam-po-pa)

In addition, he sometimes added two more teachers to these to make up the list of his six "fundamental masters" (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*):[129]

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[128] For brief biographies of Zhang, see dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-'phreng-ba, pp. 806-809, and 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, the *Blue Annals*., pp. 711-715 (*nya* 136a-137b), G. Roerich transl. 711-716. There also existed a full-length biography (*rnam thar rgyas pa*) of bla-ma Zhang by Tshal-pa Kun-dga'-rdo-rje, according to note 583 to the *Deb ther dmar po* by Dung-dkar Blo-bzang-phrin-las (Beijing 1981, p. 446). It is not known to survive. See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 103, n. 204.

[129] See dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 807. See also Zhang's own composition, *rTsa ba'i bla ma drug gi gsol 'debs*, Writings, pp. 445-447. The full list of his teachers is

(5) 'Ol-kha-ba (a disciple of Ba-ri lo-tsā-ba [b. 1040])
(6) Ngam-shod gShen-pa rDo-rje-seng-ge (a disciple of Sa-chen Kun-dga'-snying-po [1092-1158])

Besides his instructions from sGom-pa Tshul-khrims, Zhang also received a number of important Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud instructions from the above-mentioned Mal Yer-pa, who was not a disciple of sGam-po-pa, but rather of Gling-ka-ba 'Bri-sgom ras-chen, who had studied directly under Mi-la ras-pa and was one of a group of the latter's disciples known as the "eight cotton-clad brothers" (*ras pa mched brgyad*).[130] Another bKa'-brgyud-pa master who influenced Zhang was the above-mentioned 'Ol-kha-ba. In addition, he is said to have received the Great Seal teachings of Maitrīpāda from the Indian tantric yogi (and paṇḍita) Vairocanarakṣita.[131]

Thus bla-ma Zhang was by no means the product of a single pure and homogeneous Dwags-po bka'-brgyud tradition. And in any case, the

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given by Zhang in his [b]*rGyud pa sna tshogs kyi tho byang*, Writings, pp. 426-433.

Tshal-pa Kun-dga'-rdo-rje, *Deb ther dmar po*, Beijing 1981 ed., p. 127, mentions his total number of masters as forty-four, and groups the list of his six "fundamental masters" (*rtsa ba'i bla ma*) as follows:

(1) rGwa lo-tsā-ba, by whom he was directly instructed (*gdams pa*)
(2) Mal Yer-pa-ba, through whom the yogic impediments were removed (*gegs bsal*)
(5) 'Ol-kha-ba, through whom the relative Bodhicitta was enhanced
(4) rJe sGom-tshul, through whom he directly realized the ultimate Bodhicitta
(5) dNgul-chu Be-ro-ba, and
(6) Ngam-shod gShen-pa rDo-rje-seng-ge, from whom he received all textual traditions

130 Zhang has written a fairly extensive biography of Yer-pa. See his Writings, pp. 393-426. For the teachings Zhang received from him, and their lineages, see pp. 427 and 436.

131 On this master's life, see 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *da* 3a-b; G. Roerich, transl., p. 844-47. He is thus the same as the above-mentioned teacher of Zhang, dNgul-chu Be-ro-ba. He was an alchemist who travelled all over Asia. On one occasion he is said to have drunk a cup of mercury (hence his epithet "dNgul-chu-ba" from *dngul chu*, "mercury"). Zhang and Khro-phu lo-tsā-ba's uncle rGyal-tsha are listed as two of his three main Tibetan students. According to information received from Dr. Dan Martin, he gave *Cakrasamvara* initiations and *doha* instructions to Zhang in the 1160s, after the latter had met rJe sGom-tshul and probably before he composed his *Lam zab mthar thug*.

That this great yogi was from the city of Kosala in South India, and that Zhang studied under him are confirmed by Zhang's record of teachings received, *Bla ma sna tshogs*, p. 429.4 (spellings corrected): *dbang dang gdams ngag gnyis ka zhus nas/ dgyes pa rdo rje lhan cig skyes/ bde mchog lhan skyes/ gtum mo dang/ shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa yi ge cig ma dang/ yi ge drug pa'i sgrub thabs/ sa ra ha'i do ha chen mo/ ka kha'i do ha/ te lo pa'i do ha/ nag po spyod pa'i do ha/ bir ba pa'i do ha rnams zhus so//*. See also the briefer account in the *rGyal blon ma*, Writings, p. 284.1 (83b).

controversies that grew up around him do not all seem to have originated in the doctrines he learned from his teachers. On some points he had no doubt followed his own special interpretations and practices, and the lineage he founded—which came to be known by the distinctive name Zhang-pa bka'-brgyud—continued this tradition. Moreover, a certain amount of the later controversy and tumult in his life would appear to have been the direct outgrowth of his own powerful and almost irrepressible personality. According to one bKa'-brgyud-pa source, the controversies surrounding Zhang had started up even before he had come into contact with the Dwags-po bka'-brgyud lineage. On the occasion that Phag-mo-gru-pa and Zhang went to sGam-po for the first time to meet sGam-po-pa in ca. 1152-55, their specific purpose for going is said to have been to see sGam-po-pa and to ask his help in settling some dispute involving Zhang. It seems that sGam-po-pa himself (who was already in semi-retirement) then did not give the same reception or instructions to Zhang.[132] On the other hand, Phag-mo-gru-pa, who was Zhang's senior by thirteen years, was on that occasion privately summoned and that same evening accepted as a student and instructed in the *Lhan cig skyes sbyor* by the aged sGam-po-pa, who had already turned over the leadership of the monastic community to his nephew sGom-tshul-ba.[133]

Bla-ma Zhang's rambunctious energy and potential, however, could not be overlooked, and in the end he, too, was by no means turned away from Dwags-la sGam-po empty-handed. Indeed, he is said to have been favorably received there and instructed by the acting head of the community, sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po. He is recorded, in fact, to have gained decisive awakening then when introduced by the latter to the nature of mind.[134] For a number of years during this period, Zhang then wandered in remote places, practicing meditation. He became one of sGom-tshul-ba's chief disciples, and then assumed an important position

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[132] See 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, the *Blue Annals,* p. 558; Tib. *nya* 68a.5. 'Gos lo-tsā-ba later states, *nya* 137a.7, that Zhang's meeting with sGom-pa occurred in Zhang's thirty-fifth year, which would have been in 1155.

[133] See 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, the *Blue Annals,* p. 558; Tib. *nya* 68a.5; and 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Collected Writings, vol. 1, p. 295.6 (148a). This episode is presented otherwise in Zhang's biography *rGyal blon ma*, Writings, p. 270.6ff.

[134] As mentioned above, there is some question about the chronology of Zhang's meeting with sGom-pa, for 'Gos lo-tsā-ba states, *nya* 137a.7, that Zhang's meeting with sGom-pa occurred in Zhang's thirty-fifth year, which would have been in 1155. This was two years after sGam-po-pa's death.

in Central Tibet by the late 1150s, when he was entrusted to oversee the Lha-sa temples by sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po (d. 1169), who had pacified some severe political unrest there and had done extensive restorations.[135] When his senior colleague Phag-mo-gru-pa passed away in 1170, Zhang performed at Phag-mo-gru the prayers of merit dedication, but apparently did not assume the position of monastic leader.[136]

Then came trouble. According to later bKa'-brgyud-pa historians, bla-ma Zhang at some point (in the 1170s?) began to engage in wide-scale political activities, violent siddha-like conduct and even armed conflict, so that after a time he was looked at askance by even some of his fellow Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud masters.[137] Nevertheless, the later bKa'-brgyud tradition in general acknowledged him to have reached the highest realization, and he himself professed to the same. Therefore, in theory, he did not have to be bound by conventional morality and could justifiably conduct himself like a Tantric adept or *siddha*. According to the *Blue Annals* of 'Gos lo-tsā-ba (*nya* 137b), Zhang had attained *siddhi*s of realization after receiving instructions from the bla-ma 'Ol-kha-ba. Subsequently he involved himself in some religious building projects in which he used force aggressively to achieve his aims. Some building materials he took from people, some others were freely offered to him, and still others he more or less looted. The same source goes on to relate:[138] "Against those who did not obey his orders, he used to dispatch repeatedly soldiers, and he fought them." In other words, though he was an enlightened monk, he forcibly pursued certain aims in connection with his religious projects, holding that his detachment and extraordinary attainments made him exempt from the normal consequences of his deeds. As 'Gos lo-tsā-ba relates:[139]

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[135] See Dpa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 801.

[136] *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo*, vol. 3, p. 3223.

[137] His violent activities apparently began in the 1170s, after sGom-pa Tshul-khrims and Phag-mo-gru-pa's deaths. Although the chronology of these events is somewhat uncertain, these activities of his may have coincided with his building of the monastery at Tshal (1175), east of Lhasa on the other side of the sKyid-chu.

[138] G. Roerich, transl. (1949-53), p. 714.

[139] *Ibid.*, p. 715. The Tibetan text, p. 624 = *nya* 137b: *skabs shig tu bla ma 'ol kha ba dang mjal/ gdams pa zhus pas byams pa dang snying rje byang chub kyi sems la bogs thon zhing grub pa brnyes nas gtsug lag khang dang lha chen bzhengs/ de'i cha rkyen yang la la la blangs/ la las phul/ la la la btsan phrogs lta bu mdzad/ bka' las 'gal ba rnams la dmag*

[Bla-ma Zhang] engaged in various activities of a tantric adept (*siddha*), and while these were indeed difficult for others to comprehend [and accept], Zhang himself [explained them] in his *Instruction to [the bSam-yas Ruler] Lord Lha-btsan*:

> "I have abandoned the world. Many years have passed since the link with the world has been completely severed and I have entirely gone beyond into unborn space. Reckoning by these outer activities of mine, many others cannot comprehend [or accept my behavior], except for my stout-hearted disciples. Taken as objects within a worldly value system, these things are all seen to be nothing but apparently worldly activities such as metal casting, residence-bases, the closing off and controlling of roads, [enforcing] secular law, theft, and fighting. But if there fundamentally exists any connection with this world, it has died, sir."

According to a recent Tibetan historian, Zhang led armies against many independent lords in the districts of Lho-kha, 'Bri-khung, and 'Ol-kha, and thus brought under his control the people who had been the subjects of those lords.[140] He became, in effect, the most powerful warlord in central Tibet. The 16th-century scholar and historian dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba explained the historical background of Zhang's political and martial activities by asserting that they were the natural consequence of the fragmented political situation existing in those times, and he mentioned the beneficial spiritual consequences for a number of

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yong [=yang?] *dang yang du bskul nas 'thabs/ grub pa'i spyod pa sna tshogs pa mdzad de/ gzhan gyi blor shong ba dka' mod kyi/ zhang nyid kyis jo bo lha btsan la gdams pa las/ kho bos ni 'jig rten blos btang/ 'jig rten dang 'brel thag sbad kyis chod nas skye med nam mkha'i ngang du cham gyis thal nas dgung lo mang po lon pa lags so/ kho bo'i phyi'i byed spyod 'di rnams kyi rjes su dpags nas/ slob ma snying rag ma rnams ma gtogs pa gzhan mang po cig gi blor ma shong bar bdog/ mi chos kyi yul du gzhi phab nas/ lugs ma dang gnas gzhi dang rgyal khrims dang lam rgya dang rku sgyabs dang 'khrug pa la sogs pa 'jig rten 'di ba'i byed spyod kho na 'dra ba sha stag du snang ste/ 'jig rten 'di dang 'brel ba gting nas bdog na 'gum pa lags so//*. The subject of the final verb *'gum pa lags* is unclear: could it be Zhang himself? Cf. also Zhang's own remarks in his *rNam thar shes rab grub ma*, p. 35.1 (18a): *'khon du 'dzin pa dang/ chad pa gcod pa la sogs pa'i bya ba thams cad 'jig rten pa dang tshul bstun pa mang du byung ste/ gting nas zhe sdang skyes pa'i rang rgyud pa med.*

140 Dung-dkar Blo-bzang-phrin-las, ed. *Deb ther dmar po*, Beijing 1981 ed., p. 445: *de nas sku tshe'i dkyil nas sku tshe'i smad du ma slebs bar/ lho kha dang/ 'bri khung/ 'ol kha sa khul gyi sger btsan dpon rigs mang por dmag drangs te kho tsho'i mi sde rnams dbang 'og tu bsdus par mdzad/.*

Zhang's students who participated in the martial exploits Zhang had instigated:[141]

> In general, that period was a time when Tibet was without a national law and had become fragmented. Therefore [bla-ma Zhang] restricted the access to mountains, river valleys and roads to everyone. Against those who did not respect those restrictions, he performed acts of aggressive liberated behavior such as military battle. Among his disciples there were many in whom the realization of the Great Seal was born in the front-line of battle, and the nobleman Dar-ma-gzhon-nu beheld the countenance of Cakrasaṃvara while at the front line.

Zhang is said also to have taught the Great Seal to the Ti-shri Ras-pa, a realization having awakened in the latter through his teacher Zhang's words: "However you may do [or act], that is the Great Seal!"[142] Zhang's well-travelled and widely experienced contemporary Grub-thob O-rgyan-pa remarked: "Even though the three evil destinies [i.e. existences as animals, pretas and hell-beings] are taught in Tantras to be objects for being liberated [through killing], there was nobody who actually practiced such 'aggressive enlightened behavior' (*drag po'i 'phrin las*) except for Virūpa in India and Zhang Rin-po-che in Tibet."[143]

This approach of Zhang's was similar in certain respects to that of some religious madmen (*chos smyon pa*) or siddhas, although he wielded great temporal and ecclesiastical power. But it was not enthusiastically received by all his fellow influential bKa'-brgyud-pa clerics. The Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa (1110-1193), for instance, who evidently saw himself as acting in part on behalf of Zhang's master sGom-pa Tshul-khrims-snying-po (who had been a known peace-maker, like Dus-gsum-

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[141] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 808: *spyir de'i dus bod rgyal khrims med pa sil bur song ba'i skabs yin pas thams cad la ri rgya klung rgya lam rgya mdzad/ rgya 'og tu mi 'du ba rnams la dmag g.yul ngo sogs drag po'i 'phrin las mdzad pas slob ma rnams la'ang 'khrug gral du phyag rgya chen po'i rtogs pa skyes pa mang du byung zhing dpon dar ma gzhon nus 'khrug gral du bde mchog zhal mthong/.*

[142] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 810: *zhang rin po ches ji ltar byas kyang phyag chen yin gsungs pas ngo 'phrod pas.* Cf. Zhang, *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug*, p. 99.1 (26a.1-3).

[143] dPa'-bo, vol. 1, p. 810: *spyir ngan song gsum bgral ba'i zhing du bshad kyang drag po'i 'phrin las mngon sum du mdzad pa rgya gar du birwa pa dang bod du zhang rin po che las ma byung zhes grub thob o r[gy]an pas gsungs/.* Cf. D. Jackson (1990), p. 102.

mkhyen-pa himself), is said to have stated once, apparently sometime between 1185 and 1188:[144]

> "The purpose of my coming back to Central Tibet (dBus) is to fulfill sGom-tshul's command, who had told me: 'Regardless of what situation you find yourself in Eastern Tibet (Khams), return west!' and to establish a monastery here in the midst of gZhu and 'Tshur,[145] and to offer a hundred volumes written in gold to Dags-lha sGam-po, and to make a request to bla-ma Zhang not to engage in fighting, because people are unhappy with his fighting. I have come for these purposes." When he beseeched Zhang not to engage in fighting, Zhang consequently grasped his [Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa's] finger, danced about a lot, and henceforth did not engage in fighting.

Evidently Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa actually visited Tshal and met bla-ma Zhang there, at which time Zhang had numerous visions. Zhang is said to have consequently abstained from violence for the rest of his life (a period of some five years?).[146] In 1189 when Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa built the "Upper Chapel" (*mchod khang gong ma*) at mTshur-phu, bla-ma Zhang made an offering of three precious objects.[147]

Zhang's violent approach during that late period of his life contrasted markedly with the pacific and strongly ethical teachings that Mi-la ras-pa is recorded to have given sGam-po-pa. These included the instruction to continue to train oneself in serving the guru, even though one has already understood one's mind as the Buddha, and to continue to observe even

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[144] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *Blue Annals*, p. 715; Tibetan text, p. 479 = *nya* 34a.3. The Tibetan: *kho bos dbus su 'ongs pa'i dgos pa/ sgom tshul gyi zhal nas khyod khams su skyid sdug ci byung yang yar shog gsung ba'i bka' sgrub pa dang/ gzhu 'tshur gyi bar 'dir dgon pa 'debs pa dang/ dags lha sgam por gser gyi glegs bam brgya 'bul ba dang/ bla ma zhang gi 'khrug pa la mi mams mi dga' bar 'dug pas/ khong la 'khrug pa mi mdzad pa'i zhu ba 'bul ba la 'ongs pa yin gsung/ zhang la 'khrug pa mi mdzad par zhus pas/ zhang gis phyag mdzub la 'jus nas bro mang du brdungs nas de phyin chad 'khrug pa ma mdzad/.*

[145] This refers to his founding of a monastery at sTod-lung 'Tshur-phu, which he did soon thereafter.

[146] A similar passage is found in Si-tu and 'Be-lo, vol. 1, p. 24 (*da* 12b), including the references to Bla-ma Zhang: *zhang tshal pa sgom chen pa 'khrugs pa mdzad pa 'di/ ma bar snyan pas bshol 'debs pa dang/ .... gsungs nas tshal du byon/ 'khrugs pa bsdums pas/ bla ma zhang gis rin po che la dag snang mtha' yas pa gzigs te/ phyag nas 'jus te bro brdung/ phyis sku ma 'das kyi bar du 'khrugs pa ma mdzad/.*

[147] *Ibid.*

small meritorious and moral matters, even though ultimately there is nothing to be cultivated or purified and one has understood that the connection of moral causation is from the ultimate point of view empty like space.[148]

In quite a few of his writings, Zhang discussed or alluded to the disputes and controversies he became embroiled in, and he revealed his attitude toward those activities for instance in a brief autobiographical poem that he composed in a bird year (1177?) at bSam-yas.[149] His *rNam thar bsam yas ma*, which relates events that occurred at bSam-yas in the fire-bird year 1177, likewise refers to his awareness that others might doubt his attainments because of his various worldly activities.[150] Some of his songs and poems embody a ruthless and sardonic self-criticism which is so extreme that the overall effect is ironical and humorous, though not without an occasional note of wistful and discouraged melancholy.[151]

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148 dPa'-bo, vol. 1, p. 797: *spyir yang ri dags rmas ma'am bya bzhin du zon bag che bar bya/ zhi ba dul ba rtse reg chung bar bya/ rtogs pa shin tu chung bar bya/ ri mtshams dang smra bcad dang/ 'dag sbyar gsum la dus 'da' bar bya/ rang sems sangs rgyas su rtogs kyang bla ma rdo rje slob dpon mi spong ba la bslab/ gsag sbyang gnyis pa rang sar dag kyang tshogs chung ngu chung ngu nas gsag/ las 'bras nam mkha' ltar go yang sdig pa chung ngu nas 'dzem/.* Zhang elsewhere in his *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug*, p. 88 (20b), taught that the practitioner should completely avoid strife: *skad cig tsam yang 'khrug mi bya//.* See also spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal and the latter's quotations of sGom-tshul in L. Lhalungpa (1986), pp. 107 and 391; Tib. 96b and 362b. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 372 (Tib. p. 345b), where sGam-po-pa is quoted as stating that moral cause and effect cease to function after the realization of the Dharmakāya. Cf. also gNubs Sangs-rgyas-ye-shes, *bSam gtan mig sgron*, p. 47.2, on no longer needing to observe moral discipline to attain enlightenment once the theory has been actually understood (*lta ba rtogs nas*).

149 Zhang, *sNa tshogs zhi gnas,* Writings, pp. 620.7-623.6. See also the verses of criticism entitled the *Phyag khrig* [or: khrid?] *mchog ma*, p. 664. There was in the previous century a bKa'-gdams master named Chag Khri-mchog (d. 1058?). Perhaps the writer of these verses ("Breng-'da' Phyag Khrid-mchog") was a member of the same Chag clan, which subsequently produced the masters Chag dGra-bcom-pa (1153-1216) and Chag Chos-rje-dpal (1197-1264) in the generations after Zhang.

150 Zhang, Writings, p. 93 (47a): *nga'i yon tan mi la ma bshad/ nga ma shi'i bar yon tan bshad na/ khong nas gzhi rtsing/ gnya' dang 'khrugs pa byed/ rgyal khrims byas nas/ 'di tsam gyi 'dod pa yod pa las/ kho la yon tan 'di 'dra na*[m?] *'ong zer nas/ sdig pa kham po che gsogs tu 'ong ngo/.*

151 See for example his pompously and ironically entitled *Bla ma zhang ston gyis/ bla ma zhang ston rang nyid la shin tu ngo mtshar ba'i sgo nas bstod pa*, Writings, pp. 666.6-673.2.

In 1187, six years before his passing, Zhang founded his main monastery at Tshal Gung-thang.[152] He built there a huge image (of the Buddha?) called the *Lha chen dpal 'bar*.[153] Later, shortly before his death in 1193, he laid the foundations for his own large reliquary stūpa.[154]

Zhang's successor was mNyam-med Shākya-ye-shes (d. 1207), who lead the monastic center from 1194 until his death. Afterwards there followed a succession of abbots at Tshal Gung-thang. Nevertheless, the Tshal-pa bka'-brgyud tradition did not persist as a distinct entity for more than a few centuries; it had already died out by the 16th century, according to dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba.[155] Large fragments of Zhang's collected writings, including numerous autobiographical reminiscences, are preserved in a modern reproduction, and these must be consulted by anyone seeking a deeper insight into his intense and by no means simple personality.[156]

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[152] Apparently there was a small dialectical seminary of dge-bshes gZad-pa at Tshal when Zhang was invited there by "dpon rGyal-tshas a-ma lha-cig", which was subsequently dismantled. See Zhang, Writings, p. 150.6: *dge bshes gzad pa'i mtshan nyid kyi gra sa 'di tsam bu shig* [sic] *nas*. (I do not know who this "dge-bshes gZad-pa" was, though a bZad-pa Dar-ma-'od was the tenth abbot of gSang-phu, his thirty-year tenure having begun in the last years of the 1100s.) A seminary of the gSang-phu tradition is said to have been founded over a century later at Tshal Gung-thang Chos-'khor-gling by 'Jam-dbyangs Shākya-gzhon-nu (abbot of gSang-phu Gling-smad in the early 1300s) and the Tshal-pa nobleman dGa'-bde. See A. Ferrari (1958), p. 106, and Shākya-mchog-ldan, *rNgog lo*, p. 452.1. Later this seminary became famous, and it was sometimes enumerated with gSang-phu and sNye-thang bDe-ba-can as one of a triad of the most important dialectical seminaries in Central Tibet in the mid-to late-14th century (*gsang bde gung gsum*), i.e. before the founding of the three great dGe-lugs-pa convents.

[153] Ye-shes-rtse-mo, p. 265.

[154] Si-tu Paṇ-chen, p. 81.3.

[155] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 811.

[156] *Writings (bka' thor bu) of Zhang g.Yu-brag-pa brtson-'grus-grags-pa* (Tashijong: 1972).

4

SA-SKYA PAṆḌITA AND THE LATER CONTROVERSIES

To say that bla-ma Zhang was one of the more colorful, controversial and intriguing of the 12th-century Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud masters would thus be no overstatement. And it is curious that his extreme practices—which even in the eyes of his bKa'-brgyud-pa co-religionists bordered on the scandalous—have so far gone almost completely unremarked by modern scholars.[157] Instead, some of the few modern Western investigators of these controversies (together with certain Tibetans) have maintained that the subsequent inter-sectarian doctrinal disputes of the 13th century arose merely because of the sectarian antagonisms of Sa-skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251), who was supposed to have been personally biased against the tradition of Zhang and other bKa'-brgyud-pas.[158]

Sa-paṇ was no doubt deeply disturbed by some of what Zhang had done or taught. But his doctrinal criticisms of Zhang's teachings must be treated as genuine—i.e. as serious discussions according to doctrinal, hermeneutical and philosophical principles—and not as mere invective.[159] Moreover, the teachings that Sa-paṇ criticized do

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[157] In the only published reference to them I know of, R. A. Stein (1972), p. 146, understandably mistook the nature of Zhang's activities, translating for example *'khrugs gral* ("line of combat") as "meetings for the settlement of conflicts." K. Lange (1976), pp. 54ff has studied the Tshal-pa noble lineage based on historical writings by the 5th Dalai bla-ma and sDe-srid Sangs-rgyas-rgya-mtsho. In p. 155, n. 68, she lists references to Bla-ma Zhang's biography (by Si-tu dGe-blo) and autobiographical writings in A-khu-chin's list and in the writings of Brag-dgon zhabs-drung dKon-mchog-bstan-pa-rab-rgyas. Forthcoming studies by Dr. Dan Martin will address Zhang and his works.

[158] See, for instance, Roger Jackson (1982) and M. Broido (1987).

[159] Several later bKa'-brgyud-pa writers, including Padma-dkar-po and sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, accuse Sa-paṇ of cavil based on personal bias. See D. Jackson (1990), p. 87, n. 59. It is interesting to note that Padma-dkar-po in his autobiography, *ga*

contradict mainstream Indian Buddhist Mahāyāna doctrine as he understood it, *if they are presented as ordinary Mahāyāna teachings.* And some of what Sa-paṇ identified as being a "Chinese religious tradition" or a "Chinese-style Great Perfection" within these Great Seal traditions did indeed possess important similarities with Chinese Buddhist meditative school of Ch'an,[160] and of course with the Tibetan Great Perfection as well.[161] Such features have also had a long history within the development of Buddhism in Central and South Asia, and may in fact go back ultimately to conflicting general approaches that already existed as differing strands within Indian Buddhism.[162]

Indian Critics of the Tibetan Great Seal?

One of the reasons that Sa-paṇ may have linked these doctrines with China and with the Tibetan Great Perfection tradition was that the Great Seal as formulated and presented in the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud systems was perhaps not recognized as an established Indian Buddhist doctrine by the Indian scholars with whom he had closest contacts, for instance by the

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nya 84a, denied that he had written his own criticisms of the *sDom gsum rab dbye* out of vexation or annoyance (*zhe sun*).

160 In Ch'an, similar teachings were common; in fact, "see the nature and achieve Buddhahood" became the paradigmatic statement of Ch'an gnoseology, according to R. Buswell (1987), p. 341. The idea is also expressed in the concise saying on Ch'an practice traditionally attributed to Bodhidharma:

A separate transmission outside the scriptures, / No reliance upon words and letters, / Directly pointing to the human mind, / See the nature and achieve Buddhahood.

See R. Buswell (1988), p. 250, note 1, who refers to further discussion of this saying in D. T. Suzuki's *Essays in Zen Buddhism* (London: 1958), vol. 1, p. 176. The first Chinese master to state "See your own nature and become a Buddha" was apparently Seng-liang, who flourished in the early 6th century and was inspired to that statement by a passage in the *Nirvāṇa Sūtra*. See D. Chappell (1983), p. 123, note 19.

A similar statement that the understanding of one's own mind is precisely the Awakening of Buddhahood is found in the *lTa ba'i phreng ba* attributed to Padmasambhava, and it is quoted there from a source entitled *Khams gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i rtog*[s?]*pa* as propounding: "The thorough understanding (or realization) of one's mind is precisely the Awakening of Buddhahood." The Tibetan: *rang sems so sor rtogs pa nil / sangs rgyas byang chub de nyid dol /*. See Rong-zom Paṇḍita Chos-kyi-bzang-po's *lTa ba'i phreng ba* commentary, p. 98, and the *rtsa ba*, p. 9.1.

161 See S. Karmay (1988), p. 175. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 197-200.

162 See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), *passim*.

paṇḍita Śākyaśrībhadra (1140s-1225)[163] and the junior paṇḍitas in the latter's entourage, who had come as to Tibet in the early 1200s.[164] Sa-paṇ may have concluded that if it was not known in India, it had come from elsewhere.

One of the junior Indian paṇḍitas with whom Sa-paṇ had studied a little together under Śākyaśrībhadra (but with whom Sa-paṇ's relations otherwise do not seem to have been particularly cordial at a later time) was Vibhūticandra.[165] The latter is said to have criticized the Great Seal of the early 'Bri-gung-pa in particular in about 1207, which was before Sa-paṇ rejoined Śākyaśrībhadra's group and received ordination at Myang-smad in 1208. In particular, Vibhūticandra supposedly slandered the 'Bri-gung-pa, saying, "For wealth, the 'Bri-gung-pa is great," and that the Great Seal adherent or master there was a great imposter [or sham] (*nor 'bri khung ba che zer te phyag rgya chen po ba 'di rdzun che ba yin zer byas pas*). In its wording, at least, this account given in the biography of

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[163] For the sources on the life of this master, see D. Jackson (1990a), introduction.

[164] Indian paṇḍitas are also traditionally said to have been opposed to the Tibetans learning rDzogs-chen, and Vairocana is said to have been slandered by the Indians. See S. Karmay (1988), pp. 25-6. These accounts, though legendary, would seem to indicate that from early times there existed some sort of tension between Indian Buddhists and Tibetan followers of the Great Perfection.

[165] Vibhūticandra is said to have refused to honor Sa-paṇ's uncle Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan when Śākyaśrībhadra's entourage visited Sa-skya, and later he wrote a work on the three vows, his *sDom gsum 'od kyi phreng ba* (Peking Tanjur, no. 4549), which apparently includes replies to Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan's views and positions at variance with Sa-paṇ's *sDom gsum rab dbye*. Tāranātha gives a more detailed account of Vibhūticandra's activities and of his conflict with the Sa-skya-pa in his *sByor drug lhan thabs*, Collected Works, vol. 3, pp. 483-86 (19a-20b). I am indebted to Mr. Cyrus Stearns for this reference.

L. van der Kuijp (1987), p. 67, n. 7, correctly noted the existence of the above disharmony and alluded to it as follows: "While part of Śākyaśrī's entourage, Vibhūticandra never seems to have met Sa-skya Paṇḍita and, instead, enjoyed close relations with the 'Bri-gung-pa. It would appear that his view of the interrelationship of the three vows (*sdom gsum, trisaṃvara)* was taken over by the 'Bri-gung-pa whereafter the latter became the target of Sa-skya Paṇḍita's sustained criticism in the *sDom gsum [rab] dbye*." That Sa-paṇ and Vibhūticandra met, however, can be accepted. Sa-paṇ probably met him together with the others in Śākyaśrībhadra's retinue at his very first meeting with the latter, and some of the traditionally recorded tensions apparently had their origin in Vibhūticandra's conduct while at Sa-skya (where Śākyaśrī spent the rainy season retreat in 1210). The study of Sa-paṇ and Vibhūticandra together under Śākyaśrībhadra, moreover, is recorded in Sa-paṇ's biography by Lho-pa Rin-chen-dpal. See D. Jackson (1987), p. 27. Sanskrit manuscript materials in Vibhūticandra's hand survived at Sa-skya and were discovered there in the 1930s by Rāhula Sāṃkṛtyāyana. See also L. van der Kuijp (1987), p. 67. On Vibhūticandra as a Mādhyamika, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1981), p. 117 and n. 383.

Sa-paṇ's teacher Śākyaśrībhadra (1140s-1225) by bSod-nams-dpal-bzang-po may have been a later fabrication. The traditional citing of the great wealth of the 'Bri-gung-pa, the kindness of the sTag-lung-pa and the wisdom of the Sa-skya-pa belongs typically to accounts describing a period about four decades later.[166] But in any case, it was not presented in that biography for the purpose of discrediting the Great Seal or the 'Bri-gung-pa, for if anything, the whole account was meant to show that in spite of Śākyaśrībhadra's refusal to visit 'Bri-gung though he was twice invited, the great Kashmiri master respected and approved of the 'Bri-gung-pa master ('Jig-rten-mgon-po), saying he was an emanation of Nāgārjuna.[167] The reason Śākyaśrī is said to have given for not coming is that some among his own Tibetan followers—specifically certain bKa'-gdams-pa and the strict Vinaya upholders called "Those [observing] a Single Seat" (*gdan gcig pa*)[168]—might possibly accrue demerit in relation to the 'Bri-gung-pa (because of their lack of faith in him) if the Paṇ-chen Śākyaśrī accepted the invitation there.[169] According to the same tradition, Vibhūticandra later saw the error of his ways and built a stūpa at 'Bri-gung by way of atonement. It is also interesting that in a different context Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (1507-1554) cited Śākyaśrībhadra as one of the Indian sources (besides Mitrayogin) for the Great Seal teachings received and transmitted by Khro-phu lo-tsā-ba (b. 1172/3).[170]

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[166] See for instance W. D. Shakabpa (1967), p. 61.

[167] There are a number of writings in the collected works of 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po that mention Śākyaśrībhadra approvingly or that have some connection with his visit to Tibet. See for instance, vol. 2, pp. 249.6-250.7, 254.6-256.7, 489.4-491 and 493.4; and vol. 3, pp. 61f, 83f, and 199-201.

[168] So called because they observed the discipline of eating only once a day, i.e. at a single sitting (*stan gcig pa: aikāsanika*).

[169] See bSod-nams-dpal-bzang-po, *Sa'i steng na 'gran zla dang bral ba kha che paṇḍi ta shākya shrī bhadra'i rnam thar*, p. 45a-b: *de nas 'bri khung pa rnams la chos rje'i zhal nas nga'i 'khor la bka' gdams pa dang gdan gcig pa la sogs pa mang bas/ khyed la las phyin ci log bsags pa srid.* 'Gos lo-tsā-ba (G. Roerich, transl., *Blue Annals*, p. 1070) also mentions Śākyaśrībhadra's refusal of two invitations to 'Bri-gung, and he gives further details in an earlier passage (*nya* 86a-b; G. Roerich trans., pp. 599-601). 'Gos lo-tsā-ba's account is apparently based on that of bSod-nams-dpal-bzang-po

[170] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1261, and Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, p. 15 (8a.2).

bSam-yas, *gTer ma*, and the Later Controversy

One curious and probably not entirely coincidental fact about the *dkar po chig thub* controversy in 12th- and 13th-century Tibet is that two of the masters most involved—bla-ma Zhang and Sa-skya Paṇḍita—both lived and taught for lengthy periods at bSam-yas itself.[171] Sa-paṇ knew that bla-ma Zhang had been active at the historically rich site of bSam-yas, which incidentally was also the locale of many "treasure text" (*gter ma*) "discoveries" before and afterward. And Sa-paṇ spoke of the tradition of the Hwa-shang as having come back to life based on "the mere text" (i.e. the mere reading) of rediscovered books.[172] But when he mentioned that somebody had recovered Ch'an texts from caches (where they had been hidden following the debate at bSam-yas), he was probably thinking of someone from the period of sGam-po-pa. The latter had indeed quoted a number of apocryphal Chinese Buddhist *cig car ba* materials in his gradualist general Mahāyāna treatise, the *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan* ("Ornament of the Jewel of Liberation"), but he is not linked to bSam-yas or to text finds by the usual historical sources.[173] On the other hand, one of the teachings of bla-ma Zhang, the so-called "Sealed Book of 'Chims-phu" (*'chims phu bka' rgya ma*), was a sort of secret *gter ma* teaching containing Great Perfection initiations and instructions that Zhang had directly received (in visions) from Padmasambhava, Śāntarakṣita, and Vimalamitra, presumably while at 'Chims-phu near bSam-yas.[174]

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[171] For references to Sa-paṇ's main seats or residences, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 36, n. 48. Another great Sa-skya-pa master with close ties to bSam-yas was Bla-ma dam-pa bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan (1312-1375). Indeed, from a certain time (the late 13th or early 14th century?) the abbot of bSam-yas came to be appointed from Sa-skya. See also Per K. Sørensen (1986), p. 56f.

[172] Sa-paṇ, DS III 174 = 26a.

[173] Some of these Ch'an works translated from Chinese into Tibetan perhaps remained in circulation after the debate and in the subsequent centuries, and thus may not have been viewed as "apocryphal" in all circles. A number of such translations are listed for instance in the lDan kar ma catalogue compiled in 812. And as mentioned above, several found their way into the later Kanjur canons.

[174] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, (N. Delhi 1959 ed., *tha*) part 1, p. 186: *zhang g.yu brag pa'i 'chims phu bka' rgya ma zhes slob dpon padma bo dhi satwa bī ma la mi tra rnams la dngos su gsan pa'i rdzogs chen gyi dbang gdams ngag yod pa.*

Whatever the case, Sa-paṇ definitely had acquired first-hand experience of Zhang's tradition and followers through his travels and protracted stays in Central Tibet. He visited dBus province more than once, and in the 1220s as well as perhaps also in the 1230s, he spent quite a long time at bSam-yas, where Zhang had formerly stayed and which just a few decades before had been a stronghold of Zhang's support—the bSam-yas ruler brTsad-po Khri-seng having been one of bla-ma Zhang's most ardent supporters.[175] (During the years of Sa-paṇ's visit to Central Tibet, the head of Zhang's main temple was one Sangs-rgyas-'bum, who was expelled from his position in 1231 by sGom-pa Ye-shes-ldan, and only allowed to return in 1242 to found a meditation center [*sgom sde*].)[176] Sa-paṇ by his criticisms was no doubt trying to counter the continuing influence of bla-ma Zhang's tradition. Since followers of this school were still very active in Central Tibet, his opposition was directed against doctrines still being propounded by living doctrinal foes, and it was correspondingly forthright.

What Was Sa-paṇ Mainly Criticizing?

Sa-paṇ is thus known to have criticized certain of the special Great Seal doctrines taught in the Dwags-po bka'-brgyud, including teachings that are found in sGam-po-pa's writings, and especially some teachings that were later championed (sometimes in perhaps more radical forms) by bla-ma Zhang and his followers. The doctrines he criticized in connection with the *dkar po chig thub* were most notably:

1. That a single method or factor (even insight into Emptiness presented as the Great Seal) could suffice soteriologically
2. That the Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*) of the Great Seal could arise through an exclusively non-conceptual meditative method
3. That the Great Seal could ever be taught outside of the Mantrayāna.

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[175] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 810.

[176] See the *Blue Annals*, p. 716; Tib. *nya* 138b. Though 'Gos lo-tsa-ba does not specify the reasons for this expulsion, according to dPa'-bo, vol. I, p. 809, it was because of a dispute between religious and secular leaders.

Sa-paṇ rejected these doctrines, denying in particular that they were the Great Seal tradition of the Indian Tantric adept Nāropa.[177] His criticisms were thus based on much more than just the presence of such teachings as "no mentation at all" (*ci yang yid la mi byed pa*: *amanasikāra*) also in the doctrines attributed to Mo-ho-yen.[178] Moreover, his criticisms were not merely attempts at rejecting Maitrīpāda's *amanasikāra* doctrine, which some later Tibetans such as Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma (1737-1802) identified as "Maitrīpāda's Great Seal, the *dkar po chig thub*."[179]

Does this mean that Sa-paṇ through such criticisms was totally condemning all Great Seal instructions or all "introductions to the nature of mind"? Not at all. His chief concern in the present discussions was to establish the proper ways and contexts for teaching these. In some of the epistles preserved in Sa-paṇ's works, one does find passages in which Sa-

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177 On the life of Nāropa, see H. Guenther (1963).

178 Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 109.

179 Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma, p. 170.4 (*kha* 25b.4), portrays Sa-paṇ's criticisms as having been so directed, and therefore rejects them as unsatisfactory, saying: "Since this is clearly not the position of 'performing no mentation at all,' it is evident that the refutations [by Sa-paṇ] in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* were improper" (*ci yang yid la mi byed pa'i phyogs ni min par gsal bas sdom gsum gyi dgag pa rnams thub chod kyi gsung du mngon no*). However, Sa-paṇ never seems to mention specifically that the Tibetan *dkar po chig thub* involved the lack of "mentation" (*manasikāra*, *yid la byed pa*), but uses instead such terms as "non-discursiveness" (*nirvikalpa*: *rnam par mi rtog pa*), even when characterizing the Hwa-shang's doctrine in his presentation of the traditional history of the bSam-yas debate. In the above-mentioned work, Thu'u-bkwan identifies the *dkar po chig thub* over-narrowly as "the Great Seal of Maitrīpāda" (*mai tri'i phyag chen dkar po chig thub*), and therefore tries to exculpate Zhang because this doctrine of "complete non-mentation" (*ci yang yid la mi byed pa*) is not to be found in Zhang's [*Lam zab mthar thug*?] treatise. Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 109.

Many later bKa'-brgyud-pas understood Sa-paṇ to have been "hostile" especially to Maitrīpāda's non-mentation cycle. See for instance Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, p. 11.3 (6a.3), and the translation by D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1257. Here other bKa'-gdams-pas are also said to have shared this basically negative attitude, which, as mentioned in a previous note, Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje attributed originally to Gro-lung-pa's criticisms of the *Yid la mi byed pa* as not being Madhyamaka.

Sa-paṇ does not seem to have criticized specifically the *amanasikāra* doctrines of Maitrīpāda. He also did not criticize here the pernicious doctrines that spread in the western Himalayas in the 9th and 10th century, for he considered those and other erroneous doctrines to have been authoritatively refuted and eradicated by previous great scholars such as Rin-chen-bzang-po and Zhi-ba-'od, as he discusses in a final passage of chapter III (verses 603-6 = 45b) of his *sDom gsum rab dbye*. Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 104.

paṇ gives the impression of rejecting an "introduction to the nature of mind" on theoretical grounds. For instance, in his reply to the eleventh question of Nam-mkha'-'bum, regarding how one should introduce the mind, he stated: "According to my tradition, since the mind has no nature, there is nothing to introduce. The absence of awareness and the lack of mental activities has been termed the 'mindfulness of the Buddha.'"[180]

But in another epistle, his replies to the questions of the great meditator from sNyi-mo, Sa-paṇ explained himself at much greater length, showing that he did recognize that the understanding of Emptiness, the ultimate reality of the mind, was an essential factor without which Buddhahood was impossible. His denial of the existence of any nature of mind to be "introduced" referred to the paradoxical nature of understanding the absolute: it was an understanding of something about which there was nothing to be understood in any ordinary sense.[181]

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[180] Sa-paṇ, *bKa' gdams nam mkha' 'bum*, p. 416.1.5 (*na* 243b): *dri ba bcu gcig pa/ sems kyi ngo ji ltar sprod zer ba la/ kho bo'i lugs kyis sems la ngo bo med pas sprad rgyu mi bdog/ dran pa med cing yid la bya ba med pa ni sangs rgyas rjes su dran pa zhes ming tu btags pa yin/*. For Haribhadra on *buddhānusmṛti* and *asmaraṇa*, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 155 and 159f.

[181] Sa-paṇ, *sNyi mo sgom chen la*, pp. 417.4-418.2 (*na* 247a-248a). *bcu drug pa sems stong par rtogs pa la sangs rgyas 'byung ngam mi 'byung zer ba la/ stong pa rkyang pa rtogs pa las sangs rgyas mi 'byung/ shes bya thams cad rtogs na 'tshang rgya ba yin/ de la'ang rtogs lugs gnyis yod/ don dam pa rtogs* [247b] *rgyu med par rtogs pa dang/ kun rdzob tu ci snyed yod pa de snyed so sor rtogs pa yin/*

bcu bdun pa/ khyod rtogs ldan zhal gyis bzhes sam mi bzhes zer ba la/ ngas don dam par chos gang yang rtogs rgyu ma myed pas/ rtogs ldan du khas mi len/ tha snyad kun rdzob tu shes bya rig pa'i gnas lnga shes pas mkhas par khas 'che ba yin/

bco brgyad pa/ khyed kyi gra pa na sems ngo 'phrod pa yod dam zer ba la/ nged kyi gra pa 'di na'ang don dam par sems rtogs rgyu med par go la/ tha snyad kun rdzob tu shes bya la mkhas pa mang po gda'/ sems la ngo bo med par sems ngo shes pa cang mchi'am/

bcu dgu pa sems ngo ma 'phrod na/ bsod nams kyi tshogs bsags kyang gnas skabs kyi bde bar mi 'gyur ram zer ba la/ sems kyi gnas lugs stong pa nyid kyi don ma rtogs na bsod nams kyi tshogs kyis rnam grol gyi bde ba thob mi nus par/ srid pa'i rtse mo man chad kyi bde ba'i rgyur 'gyur ba lags mod/ bsod nams kyi tshogs ma rdzogs shing/ shes bya mi shes na sems stong par rtogs pa rkyang pa la'ang sangs rgyas can mchi'am/ stong par rtogs pa rkyang pa nyan thos kyi 'gog pa la'ang yod/ nam mkha' stong par yang yod de/ de dag la sangs rgyas ji ltar mchi/ des na shes bya thams cad la mkhas shing/ rang gi ngo bo rtogs rgyu med par rtogs/ mkhas rgyu med par mkhas pa la sangs rgyas 'byung ba mdo rgyud thams cad kyi dgongs pa yin/

nyi shu pa/ bla ma pa dus ji tsam na sangs rgyas pa'i nges pa mchis sam zer ba la/ gang zag [248a] *la las sems rkyang pa stong par rtogs kyang/ thabs kyi yon tan ma rdzogs/ la la yon tan kyang sems stong par ma rtogs/ la la gnyis ka yod kyang/ thabs mkhas pas 'phen mi nus/ kha cig la gzhan yod kyang/ byin brlabs kyi brgyud pa med pas gsal snang bskyed ma nus/ des na de dag la sangs rgyas 'gyang gis dogs/ nged la 'di rnams ci rigs*

Nevertheless, introducing an ignorant person merely to an understanding of the nature of mind was of no great benefit, for that person would remain still ignorant of the most basic essentials. He could hardly even call himself a Buddhist. As Sa-paṇ explained in the "Discriminative Understanding" chapter of his *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal* (57b-58a):

> [Question:] In general, when one introduces [the nature of] mind, is this an introduction to the nature of mind alone, or does one need to introduce also the nature of external objects? [Answer:] The introduction of [the nature of] mind alone is a non-Buddhist Indian sectarian tradition. That is an erroneous path because by means of it one cannot get rid of the dichotomous postulation of apprehending subject and apprehended object. If one needs to introduce also the nature of external objects, one must critically examine whether those objects have arisen from a creator-god such as Īśvara, as [some] non-Buddhist Indian sectarians maintain, or from "atoms", as the Śrāvakas maintain, [p. 58a] or whether from mind, as the [Buddhist Yogācāra] adherents of Mind-Only maintain, or out of interdependent origination, as the Mādhyamikas say.
>
> If these [entities] are held to be either existent or non-existent, one must know scripture and reasoning in order to refute those [views] because they have not gone beyond eternalism or annihilationism. Even for maintaining that the appearances [of external objects] and mind are interdependently [originated], one must know the Buddhist scriptures and reasoning. If one does not know those, one will not properly understand the insubstantiality of a person and of the factors of existence. If one has not understood the insubstantiality of a person, [one's meditation] will be no different from that of the non-Buddhist Indian sectarian. If one has not understood the insubstantiality of factors of existence, [one's meditation] will be no different from that of the Śrāvaka. In order to understand the two insubstantialities (*bdag med*), one must first remove one's erroneous imputations by means of the discriminative understanding born from learning and reflection. Independent of learning and reflection, it is impossible to understand insubstantiality. If one has not understood insubstantiality, one will not know how to cultivate in meditation [a direct understanding of this] insubstantiality. If one does not know

tshang ba/ myur du 'tshang rgya med pa'i tshul gyis 'tshang rgya ba re ba lags/

how to cultivate [that] in meditation, there will not arise discriminative understanding born from meditative realization. If discriminative understanding born from meditative realization does not arise, it is impossible for the Path of Seeing of the Saint (*Ārya*) to arise.

In one of his longer epistles, the *sKyes bu dam pa*, Sa-paṇ presented in more general terms his opinion about the introduction to the nature of mind:[182]

> ... It is not taught in any Sūtra, Tantra or great treatise that one can awaken to Buddhahood by a Self-sufficient White [simple method], as distinct from [through] the perfectly replete possession of means and discriminative knowledge. [Some] Sūtras and Tantras do indeed teach that one can gain Buddhahood by merely respectfully saluting or circumambulating, and by offering one flower, or by reciting a single dhāraṇī, or by reciting just the name of the Buddha, or by a single act of worshipful reverence, or by the arising of a single thought of Bodhicitta, or by the mere understanding of Emptiness. Yet one should understand those as being [statements with special] intention (*dgongs pa*) or allusion (*ldem dgongs*), but they are not direct expression. As Maitreyanātha said [in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* I 20]:
>
> > If one understands the sense literally, one becomes haughty oneself and one's mind is destroyed.
>
> For example, if the [various] threads do not come together, the designs on brocade will not appear. And if the seed, water and manure do not come together, [4b] the crop of a field will not appear. If all the interdependently connected [causes and conditions] do not come together, perfectly complete Buddhahood will not arise. Such is my understanding.
>
> Generally speaking, one *does* require a direct recognition of the nature of mind. Nevertheless, this can be seen to be of two types: good and bad. If one directly recognizes the nature of mind having completed the excellent qualities through [compassionate] means, there will occur the attainment of Buddhahood. But without having completed the excellent qualities, no matter how excellent the direct recognition of mind is, it is taught that [in the best case a person can

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[182] Sa-paṇ, *sKyes bu dam pa*, p. 332.2-3 (ff. *na* 73a-b = 4a-b). This whole passage is translated and quoted below in the Appendix, part II, B.

attain] the Arhatship of the Śrāvaka, in the middling case [he will be reborn in] the sphere lacking even fine substance (*arūpadhātu*), and in the worst case that one will be born in the evil destinies. A statement by Nāgārjuna, namely [MMK XXIV 11]: "If they err in the viewing of emptiness, those of small intelligence will be destroyed," was also stated with this in mind.

Similarly, though ears of grain must come from a field, there are two ways for them to come: good and bad. If the ears appear on completely developed stalks, that will be a good harvest. If they appear on [plants that] have not reached full development, there will be a poor harvest. Likewise the direct recognition of the nature of mind, too, will be sufficient if it occurs at the right time. If it happens at the wrong time, it is of no use. With these things in mind, it was taught in the *Ākāśagarbha Sūtra* that to propound emptiness to those of untrained minds was a fundamental infraction, [teaching this] with the words: "And the proclaiming of emptiness to a living being who has not trained his mind...."[183] If [thus to teach emptiness is a fundamental infraction], it goes without saying that [there would be an infraction] if it is understood.

As seen above, sGam-po-pa and his successors did prize a certain non-conceptual, non-intellectual, non-verbal approach, and they strongly devalued the reverse. Phag-mo-gru-pa's *lNga ldan* system of the Great Seal practice even termed the main theory to be cultivated and understood specifically as the "non-discursive theory" (*mi rtog pa'i lta ba*). But that referred to the insight into the ultimate, and not really to a meditative method. Moreover, Sa-paṇ himself agreed that at the final stage, the ultimate could not be known directly by conceptual thought, which could only apprehend its object indirectly through "exclusion of other."[184] Furthermore, the "non-discursive" method of both sGam-po-pa and bla-ma Zhang clearly tried to avoid certain pitfalls of a forced non-conceptual approach. sGam-po-pa, for example, on one occasion criticized those who would consciously suppress all discursive thought (*rtog pa*), saying: "Some view as a virtue the concentrated placing of mind in non-discursiveness, having stopped all discursive thoughts that appear. But that will not advance one along the Path. Such a thing is called 'lame

[183] On this quotation, see below, Appendix, part II, B.

[184] See also the sources referred to in D. Jackson (1987), p. 396, n. 95.

Gnosis.'"[185] And as mentioned above, Zhang similarly rejected a purposeful suppression of conceptual thought:[186]

> Ignorant people ... view discursive thought as a fault and stop it. They desire non-conceptualizing and purposefully try to achieve it. You will never finish sweeping away waves with a broom.
> Non-conceptualizing that arrests conceptual thought is itself a deluded conceptual thought. It is a great darkness that obscures the Dharmakāya.

Questioning the Origin of a Doctrine

One line of Sa-paṇ's criticisms was to deny the historical authenticity of how some masters of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud presented the Great Seal. In Sa-paṇ's opinion, the latter tradition—which was claimed to be from Nāropa—did not derive from its reputed source, but instead from somewhere else. Sa-paṇ had received three lineages of Nāropa's "Six Dharmas" teaching and also had studied various *doha*s including apparently those of Maitrīpāda, but he had not come across the doctrines in question at that time.[187] On the other hand, he must have noticed the strong similarities between certain of the teachings in question and the Great Perfection-like Ch'an doctrines that Mo-ho-yen had taught, and therefore he concluded that they had been picked up through "merely the

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[185] sGam-po-pa, Works, vol. 2, p. 111.6: *la las rtog pa byung tshad bkag nas rtog med la blo dril 'jog pa la yon tan du blta ste/ des lam gcod mi nus ye shes phye* [read: 'phye] *bo bya ba yin|*. See also Zhang, *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug*, p. 78.2

[186] Zhang, *Lam zab mthar thug*, pp. 756-7.

[187] For the record of Sa-paṇ's study of the three traditions of the *Nā ro chos drug* as well as various *doha* teachings, see the *sDom gsum rab dbye* III 656 (p. 320.3.4 =*na* 48a.4). As Sa-paṇ stated in a previous passage of the same work (III 497, p. 317.1.2 =*na* 41a.2), whatever criticisms he made of this *Phyag rgya chen po* tradition could only be made through pointing out contradictions with what Nā-ro-pa had taught: "Similarly, a follower of the Great Seal, too, reveres Nāropa, and if there is a contradiction with the basic teachings of Nāropa, that will refute a follower of the Great Seal."

de bzhin phyag rgya pa yang ni// nā ro pa la mos byed cing//
nā ro'i gzhung dang 'gal gyur na// phyag rgya pa la gnod pa yin//

This is an instance of the general rule that only internal contradictions have any force to disprove when criticizing another tradition through scriptural citation. A little later (III 502, p. 317.1.2 =*na* 41a.6), he cites the authority of Mar-pa's lineage of the *Nā ro chos drug*.

text" (*yi ge tsam*)—i.e. through the mere reading—of old written works of the Mo-ho-yen's school that had been banned and hidden away in caches.[188] Indirect justification for such an understanding could perhaps also be found in the fact that sGam-po-pa had quoted quite a number of apocryphal Ch'an Sūtras, especially at the end of the Discriminative Understanding chapter of his *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan* (though Sa-paṇ did not mention this or any other case specifically).[189] sGam-po-pa also had adopted certain other rDzogs-chen-like images and doctrinal formulations.[190] In any case, Sa-paṇ was here definitely thinking in

[188] Sa-paṇ, DS III 175 = 26a. Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 109. The phrase *yi ge tsam* could also have been an ironical reference to the claim of others that these teachings did *not* rely on words, texts, etc.

[189] That these quotations and teachings bear a marked similarity with the early Ch'an traditions translated into Tibetan in the *snga-dar* period can be seen from a quick glance at the manual for followers of the "Mahāyoga" preserved in the ancient Tun Huang manuscript Pelliot Tib. 116, namely the *dMyigs su med pa tshul gcig pa'i gzhung*. It is also possible that Sa-paṇ himself had also come across such writings in Central Tibet. Works attributed to Mo-ho-yen's school enjoyed at least a limited circulation among later Tibetan scholars. Tāranātha, for instance, in an answer to a query (Collected Works, vol. 13, p. 544.4) mentions having seen the *mDo sde brgyad bcu khung*. And in the 13th century, such traditions were still being transmitted by certain Tibetan Buddhist masters. The Jo-nang-pa master Kun-spangs-chen-po Thugs-rje-brtson-'grus, for instance, is recorded to have given rDzogs-chen and Chinese "Ha-shang" practical instructions to Yon-tan-rgya-mtsho, a teacher of both Bu-ston (1290-1364) and Dol-po-pa (1292-1361): *rdzogs chen sems phyogs dang/ rgya'i ha shang gi man ngag gi skor rnams gnang ngo/*. See A-mes-zhabs, *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i dam pa'i chos 'byung ba'i tshul legs par bshad pa gsang 'dus chos kun gsal ba'i nyin byed*, p. 133.3 (*tsha* 67a). I owe the last two references to Mr. Cyrus Stearns.

Somebody will have to study the occurrence of such quotations in sGam-po-pa's works in more detail in the future. But I think it is safe to say that rje sGam-po-pa (like bla-ma Zhang) did not adopt a critical attitude when dealing with materials stemming from other Tibetan *cig car ba* traditions. He apparently noted the great parallels in their approach and outlook, and simply accepted them as useful, not concerning himself about their historical background or precise origins. In this he was in a sense remaining true to the spirit of his tradition, though less so to the letter.

[190] I have studied one or two of these in "Birds in the Egg and Newborn Lion Cubs: Metaphors for the Potentialities and Limitations of 'All-at-once' Enlightenment," forthcoming in the proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on Tibetan Studies (Narita: 1992). As I show there, both sGam-po-pa and Zhang had adopted these elements. An interesting borderline case is where sGam-po-pa implicitly uses the image of the sun obstructed by clouds. (See his Collected Works, vol. 1, p. 218.5.) It is not enough merely to use the intellect to remove false conceptual imputations about the nature of things, he says. You also have to get rid of the intellect that removes those. Otherwise it is like removing black clouds but [the sun] still being obscured by white clouds. The Tibetan text: *chod byed kyi shes pa'i blo dang mi 'bral te/ de dang ma bral na sprin nag po bsal yang dkar pos bsgrib pa dang 'dra'o/ /*. On this image in Mo-ho-yen's writings, see L. Gómez

terms of real, historical links with the Mo-ho-yen's writings, and of a real break from or adulteration of the authentic Indian tradition of Nāropa that had been transmitted in Tibet by Mar-pa the Translator (1012-1097) to his student Mi-la ras-pa (1040-1123).[191] Such newly introduced doctrines, he argued, should not be accepted, because they were the same as those that had already been officially rejected at the bSam-yas debate.[192] He argued further that such doctrinal innovations—like any inventions whatsoever within a traditionalist religious system—were bogus in principle.

sGam-po-pa usually stressed Nāropa as the main source of the Great Seal lineage.[193] Although he mentioned to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa the differentiation of Nāropa's teachings—which are "possessing meditative cultivation" (*bsgom yod*) and "for the time of the path" (*lam dus su*)—with those of Maitrīpāda, which are contrastingly described as "without cultivation" (*bsgom med*), he himself seems to have stressed rather the

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(1983), p. 114 (referring to Stein 709, 2nd fragment); and M. Broido (1987), pp. 43f and 67, n. 78. J. McRae, *The Northern School and the Formation of Early Ch'an Buddhism* (Honolulu: 1986), pp. 146f and 246-50, has also investigated the sun and clouds metaphor. Bu-ston in his *Chos 'byung* attributes the same image to Mo-ho-yen (see J. Szerb [1990], p. 37), though there the discussion concerns virtuous and non-virtuous deeds.

[191] 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa, p. 649.3 (*pha* 19a) took a similar position, and he did not mention sGam-po-pa (*dag* = dual) as a transmitter of the genuine tradition before it became mixed up with other traditions: *bka' brgyud gong ma mar mi dag gi phyag chen ni mtshan nyid pa yin mod bar skabs nas chos lugs sna tshogs nyan mkhan mang pos....*

[192] See also Sa-paṇ, *Glo bo lo tsā ba'i zhus lan*, p. 414.3.5 (*na* 240b): *bcom ldan 'das kyis rgyud las sgom byed na smin sgrol gnyis las ye shes skyes na/ phyag rgya chen po yin par gsungs pa la/ rim pa gnyis kyi rnam gzhag mi shes par phyag rgya chen po bsgom pa mang/ phyag rgya chen po rang yang rgya nag ha shang gi lugs rtog pa kha tshom la byed pa mang bar gda'/ de slob dpon ka ma la shī la sogs bdag nyid chen po thams cad kyis bkag pa lags mod/.*

Sa-paṇ in a final section of chapter 3 of the *sDom gsum rab dbye* gives, moreover, a history of the main erroneous doctrines that had been authoritatively repudiated and rejected, including the perverse doctrines that spread in Western Tibet and were countered by Rin-chen-bzang-po and Atiśa. As mentioned above, Sa-paṇ apparently saw no reason to take these old controversies up anew since those doctrines had already been discredited and done away with. Go-rams-pa in his *sDom gsum rab dbye* commentary (f. 110a), however, brought up those 10th-century Western-Tibet heresies again in connection with his discussion of the Ho-shang's teachings.

[193] sGam-po-pa, Works, vol. 1, p. 445.6. See also the discussion of Shākya-mchog-ldan in his *Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma*, Collected Works, vol. 7, pp. 187-194; and Go-rams-pa's answers, *sDom pa gsum gyi bstan bcos la dris shing rtsod*, Collected Works, vol. 14, pp. 268.4.5-269.2.2 (*ta* 57a-58a).

unity of all Dharma and the identity of all meditative experience and realization.[194] Bla-ma Zhang, too, in his record of teachings received gave Nāropa as the origin of some of the teachings in question.[195] But one of the similar instructions that bla-ma Zhang did identify as coming from Maitrīpāda was the *Thog bab[s]* ("Thunderbolt Strike"), which (like the *Lam cig car*) he had received from rJe-btsun Yer-pa and not from rJe sGom-tshul.[196] A brief "fruit" (*'bras bu*) instruction by this name is also found in the collected works of sGam-po-pa and indeed is attributed to his authorship.[197] It contains a formulation of several key principles of the *cig car ba* approach, and if presented as a practice outside the Completion State of the Mantrayāna or as anything more than a description of the "fruitional" Gnosis,[198] it would have been rejected by Sa-paṇ (for whom

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194 sGam-po-pa, *Dus gsum mkhyen*, Works, vol. 1, p. 425.2 (*tha* 13a): *da lta mal 'byor pa lus rgya ma zhig pa yin/ zhi[g] nas da lta bas brgya log gis gsal la rgya cher 'gro ba yin/ pha rol du phyin pa dang/ gsang sngags gnyis kyi khyad ci yod na/ lam nye ring la khyad yod/ nā ro pa'i lugs kyis bsgoms yod yin/ mai tri pa'i lugs kyis bsgom med yin/ lam gyi dus na bsgom yod yin/ 'bras bu'i dus su bsgom mi bsgom gyi rtsis gdab med/ chos thams cad gcig yin/ nyams dang rtogs pa gcig tu 'dod pa yin/.* Cf. below, 425.6: *bsgom chen rab la snang mi snang gi rtsis gdab med* [sic] *med pa yin//*

195Sa-paṇ's tracing of the Great Seal lineage through Nāropa was not unfair, because this is precisely what Zhang Tshal-pa himself did in his own lineage record, where it is given as one and the same as his Six Yogas lineage: [b]*rGyud pa sna tshogs*, Writings, p. 439.2: *phyag rgya chen po dang/ na ro pa'i chos drug 'di'i dbang du byas na/ bcom ldan 'das rdo rje 'chang gis sprul pa te lo pas/ na ro pa la byin gyis brlabs/ des mar pa lo tsha ba la byin gyis brlabs/ mar rngog rnam gnyis kyis rje btsun mi la ras pa la bshad/ des bla ma dags po nyid sgom pa la bshad/ des bla ma dags po sgom tshul la bshad/ des bdag la gnang ba'o//.* The *Lam cig car ba* is also considered by Zhang to be a teaching of Nāropa. See his *Bla ma sna tshogs kyi tho byang*, p. 427.3: *rje btsun rin po che yer pa ba las/ lam cig char ba la sogs pa na ro pa'i gdams ngag sna tshogs/ thogs bab la sogs pa mi tri pa'i gdams ngag sna tshogs/ ....* The lineage for the *Lam cig car ba* is given as follows ([b]*rGyud pa sna tshogs*, 436.4): *lam cig char ba dang/ rims kyis pa dang/ kha 'thor ba'i dbang du byas na/ bcom ldan 'das dpal dgyes pa rdo rje/ sa bcu pa'i byang chub sems rdo rje snying po la bshad/ des sprul pa'i sku te lo pa la bshad/ des na ro pa la bshad/ des rje btsun mar pa lho brag pa la bshad/ des rje btsun [r]ngog ri bo ba la bshad/ mar pa rngog gnyis kyis rje btsun mi la ras pa la bshad/ des rje btsun gling ka ba 'bri sgom ras chen la bshad/ des rnal 'byor chen po mal yer pa la bshad/ des zhang gi sbrang ban bdag la gnang ba'o//.*

196Zhang, Writings, p. 427.

197sGam-po-pa, Works, vol. 2, pp. 215.7ff.

198Sa-paṇ in his *sDom gsum rab dbye* rejected that the rDzogs-pa chen-po was a separate vehicle (as maintained in the rNying-ma nine-vehicle system), but he accepted it as Gnosis (*ye shes: jñāna*). For Sa-paṇ, such "fruitional" instructions belonged to the "fruit"

"Fruit" teachings belonged to the "Fruit Vehicle").[199]

The tradition of stressing the role of Maitrīpāda's Great Seal teachings as paramount and of tracing the origin of the key Great Seal teachings through him back to Saraha (and to Nāgārjuna) apparently arose at a stage of the tradition subsequent to the time of sGam-po-pa and Zhang, approximately during the life of Sa-paṇ, perhaps even as a response to the questions he had raised. According to the later bKa'-brgyud-pa scholars 'Gos lo-tsā-ba (1392-1481) and Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje (8th Karma-pa, 1507-1554), this origin was asserted especially by rGod-tshang-pa (1189-1258?) or by both him and his chief disciple.[200] 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, alludes to this theme once in his chapter of the *Blue Annals* devoted specifically to Maitrīpāda's Great Seal, after having treated the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud and such masters as sGam-po-pa and Zhang as holders of a separate and

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vehicle, the Vajrayāna. See also S. Karmay (1988), p. 147.

[199] The title of the work as it appears in sGam-po-pa's collected writings is *Chos rje dags po lha rje'i gsung/ thog babs kyi rtsa ba*, and it begins with the phrase: "With regard to this instruction of the Great Seal, the Thunderbolt Strike, which is applied on top from above..." (*phyag rgya chen po'i gdams ngag thog babs yas thog tu gdab pa 'di la...*). To begin with, before the actual practical instruction, five erroneous notions are refuted:

1) Maintaining that a later excellent Gnosis is attained after one has gotten rid of the evil mind that one presently has. (This is unacceptable because as the root of all dharmas, the mind is not to be abandoned in this system.)
2) Maintaining that the five poisons or kleśas are to be purified. (This is unacceptable because in this system the poisons are to be assimilated and incorporated into the path.)
3) Maintaining that realization (*rtogs pa*) is reached after three long aeons. (This is unacceptable because in this system, realization is maintained to be right now.)
4) Maintaining that realization is reached through intelligence (*rig pa*) or discriminative understanding (*shes rab*). (This is unacceptable because in this system realization is said to be reached through the direct, practical instruction [*gdams ngag*].)
5) Maintaining that there is a qualitative distinction of better or worse between a Buddha and an ordinary sentient being. (This is unacceptable because in this system, there is no difference between them, beyond the presence or absence of realization [*rtogs pa*]).

The *gCig car ba'i lam gtso bor bton pa Thog babs* instructions are classified within Padma-dkar-po's *gsan yig* as belonging to the section *gdams ngag nyams len gyi skor*. See Padma-dkar-po, *bKa' brgyud pa*, pp. 376 and 377.2.

[200] See 'Gos lo-tsā-ba as translated by G. Roerich, p. 841, and the Tibetan, p. 745 (*da* 2a.5): *'dir chos rje rgod tshang pa'i zhal nas/ rgyal ba shākya thub pa'i bstan pa 'di la phyag rgya chen po zhes lam phul du byung bar mgo 'don mkhan bram ze chen po sa ra ha pa gda' ba bu* [?]/ *de'i lugs 'dzin pa rgya gar na rje ri khrod zhabs yab sras yin//*. Cf. Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje as translated by D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), p. 1260; Tib. p. 14 (7b.2): *don 'di la dgongs nas rgyal ba rgod tshang pa chen po yab sras kyis kyang/ phyag rgya chen po'i chos 'di mgo 'don mkhan bram ze chen po dang/ klu sgrub gnyis yin/*.

distinct lineage.[201] However, he already had briefly made the point at the end of the Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud chapter that rGod-tshang-pa had explained the [general Mahāyāna] Perfections Mahāmudrā of sGam-po-pa as being [the system] maintained by Lord Maitrīpāda. But there 'Gos-lo had concluded with the emphatic assertion that sGam-po-pa had definitely taught the Mantrayāna Great Seal, too, to his intimate disciples.[202]

Some other 16th-century Dags-po bKa'-brgyud-pas such as sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (1513-1596?) and dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba (1501-1556) carried this historical interpretation further and described their Great Seal doctrine as being a special transmission of the Great Seal that was not transmitted by Nāropa, but rather by Maitrīpāda, it being the quintessential sense of the Great Seal (*phyag rgya chen po snying po'i don*) realized by Saraha and transmitted to Nāgārjuna and then to the latter's student Śavari, who was Maitrīpāda's master.[203] The 8th Karma-pa Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, too, portrayed the "Amanasikāra-Madhyamaka" (*yid la mi byed pa'i dbu ma*) of Maitrīpāda as that "Madhyamaka" which Mar-pa, Mi-la and sGam-po-pa had been teaching.[204] This seems also to have been the position taken by Shākya-mchog-ldan.[205] Such a characterization circumvents the thrust of Sa-paṇ's original historical criticism regarding its origin with Nāropa (Sa-paṇ never explicitly criticized the *amanasikāra* teaching of Maitrīpāda), and it must be said in favor of this bKa'-brgyud-pa reply that their tradition did inherit numerous disparate lineages, including a large number of ones from masters other than Nāropa. It is just possible that Sa-paṇ may also have taken certain *cig car ba* doctrinal elements inherited from Maitrīpāda as having come ultimately from a Great Perfection-like Ch'an origin. But

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[201] Mar-pa is however listed in an alternative list of Maitrīpa's four "spiritual sons," and the lineages from Maitrīpa translated and transmitted by Mar-pa were termed a "side-" or "lateral-translation" tradition (*zur 'gyur*). See 'Gos, *da*, p. 2b; G. Roerich, transl., p. 843.

[202] 'Gos-lo, p. 633.3 (*nya* 142a): *de bas na sgam po pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i phyag rgya chen po ni mnga' bdag mai tri pa'i bzhed pa yin par rje rgod tshang pas kyang bshad do// sngags kyi lam du gyur pa'i phyag rgya chen po yang rje sgam po pas nang gi slob ma rnams la nges par bstan to//* Cf. G. Roerich, transl., p. 725; M. Broido (1985), p. 13.

[203] See dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-pa, vol. 1, p. 772. See also spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal's account in L. Lhalungpa transl. (1986), p. 117; Tib. p. 106a.

[204] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), pp. 1256-58; Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, pp. 10-11 (5b-6a).

[205] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Phyag rgya chen po'i shan 'byed*, Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 347.

regarding the existence of at least some Ch'an or rDzogs-chen contacts somewhere in the lineage, Sa-paṇ was certainly not just imagining things, as can be seen from some of sGam-po-pa's quotations and doctrinal formulations. It can also be said in Sa-paṇ's support that the early Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa masters after sGam-po-pa such as bla-ma Zhang did not always carefully distinguish a separate origin for these teachings, and they sometimes did apparently combine lineages of Nāropa and Maitripāda, for example, when accounting for the transmission of the Great Seal.[206]

When Sa-paṇ called these Great Seal teachings "present-day" (lit.: "present" *da lta'i*) doctrines or stated in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* that the related teachings were not known until after Mar-pa and not before Mi-la, he was implying that they had newly come into currency within that tradition during the time of sGam-po-pa, the great innovator and systematizer of this school. The main Sa-skya-pa commentators agreed that Sa-paṇ in his criticisms of *gcig-thub* teachings was chiefly criticizing teachings of sGam-po-pa or his lineage.[207] The Dwags-po bKa-brgyud-pas, too, characterized sGam-po-pa as having been the one who significantly altered the methods of the Great Seal presentation or instruction within their tradition, and a number of bKa'-brgyud-pa masters agreed that most of the great Mar-pa bKa'-brgyud early adepts, including even Mi-la, had combined the Great Seal and Great Perfection.[208]

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[206] See also 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Collected Works, vol. 1 (*ka*), p. 295, who when describing the studies of his master Phag-mo-gru-pa, enumerated the two traditions of *amanasikāra* as distinct from the Great Seal, the latter being treated as the same as the Six Dharmas of Nāropa: *rdzogs chen/ zhi byed/ thun 'jug/ a ma na se gsang sngags kyi chags srol gnyis/ phyag rgya chen po'am dpal nā ro pa'i chos drug la sogs pa/.*

[207] See for instance Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma*, Collected Works, vol. 7, p. 85: *gzhung 'dir yang/ la la gcig thub sgom pa yi// rjes la bsngo ba bya dgos zer// zhes sogs rnams kyang/ rje dags po'i* [b]*rgyud 'dzin rnams la gsung ba yin pas so//.*

[208] dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, (N. Delhi, 1959, ed., *tha*), part 1, p. 186: *rje mi la sogs mar pa'i bka' brgyud kyi grub chen phal cher kyis phyag rdzogs gcig tu sbyor zhing 'bri gung 'jig rten mgon po dang thams cad mkhyen pa rang byung rdo rje sogs kyis rtsa 'khor lo lnga la sgrub pa bka' brgyad kyi rigs lnga dang rtsa phran la gzhan gsum bkod pa dang/ rje rgod tshang pas dzā landha rar byon dus de'i skor du rdzogs chen gyi grub thob mang po mjal ba dang rje yang dgon pa'i thugs dam rdzogs chen las 'khrungs pa dang zhang g.yu brag pa'i 'chims phu bka' rgya ma zhes slob dpon padma bo dhi satwa bī ma la mi tra rnams la dngos su gsan pa'i rdzogs chen gyi dbang gdams ngag yod pa sogs* [g]*sar ma nyid kyi yang skyes chen mtha' dag gis mngon du mdzad cing/.* Here dPa'-bo is demonstrating that the Great Perfection was widely recognized even among gSar-ma-pa masters, and just before this he cites Pha-dam-pa Sangs-rgyas and the latter's teacher Buddhaguhya, as Indian teachers of

Sa-paṇ's Point of View

What was Sa-paṇ's standpoint for making these criticisms? Was all this just a lot of scholastic hair-splitting?[209] Though Sa-paṇ's criticisms have occasionally been characterized in such ways or worse by later followers of the criticized traditions, in fact the issues he raised were fundamental points of doctrine. When addressing the first main point, namely [1] whether a single method or factor (even the realization of Emptiness or *śūnyatā*) could suffice soteriologically (and the related theme of whether in general a non-conceptual method can result in Buddhahood), Sa-paṇ's standpoint was primarily that of an upholder of the general Mahāyāna or "Pāramitāyāna" tradition of India, which maintained as one of its fundamental doctrines that insight into Emptiness must always be linked with compassion, and that discriminative understanding must be coupled with skillful compassionate means. The second and third main points that he addressed (namely [2] whether the Gnosis [*ye shes: jñāna*] of the Great Seal could arise through an exclusively non-conceptual meditative method, and [3] whether the Great Seal could legitimately be taught outside of the Mantrayāna) for Sa-paṇ had to do specifically with the Tantric domain of Mahāyāna practice, and his standpoint in these cases was primarily that of an upholder of Indian Tantric traditions. In other words, here he was speaking as a Tantric master and teacher, maintaining traditions that he had received mainly from his uncle Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan (1147-1216) but also from Indian masters such as Śākyaśrībhadra.

In 12th-century Indian and Tibetan Buddhism, a single master often embodied several traditions and indeed sought to integrate in a harmonious way a number of originally quite different systems of Buddhist practice, including monasticism, general Mahāyāna and Tantra. A single Buddhist could quite legitimately study Vinaya discipline, Pramāṇa epistemology and the Yogācāra, for instance, and also practice Tantra, yet still maintain a resolutely Mādhyamika theory of the absolute.[210] In the

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the Great Perfection, as well as one of the teachers of Śākyaśrībhadra whom I have not been able to identify.

[209] Cf. S. Karmay (1988), p. 148.

[210] There is a tendency among some modern students of Tibetan Buddhism to lose sight of this fact. See, for instance, S. Matsumoto (1990), p. 19, who finds something

case of such widely experienced and broadly based Buddhists, one must always ask on what level they were speaking and from what doctrinal standpoint, thus keeping their multifarious background in mind. If we were to consider Sa-paṇ as a mere dialectician or scholastic of the general Mahāyāna, for instance, we would completely lose sight of the full dimensions of his own spiritual life, the deepest level of which consisted of his experiences through Tantric meditation.[211] We would then also lack an adequate background for understanding his doctrinal discussions of Tantric practice.

Many sources indicate that Sa-paṇ, in addition to his other fields of expertise, was highly proficient in the theory and practice of the Mantrayāna. Tantra was the main subject of his studies in his youth, and he was the main recipient of a vast amount of Vajrayāna teachings from his uncle, the preeminent master Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan.[212] Many of his studies with the Indian paṇḍitas such as Śākyaśrībhadra were also devoted to Tantric subjects. Later in his life he continued to devote considerable efforts to Tantric subjects—by actively transmitting the same lineages to his nephew 'Phags-pa (1235-1280) and many other disciples, by his discussions of related issues in his doctrinal treatises, and by his editing the vast corpus of Tantric writings left by two of his uncles (bSod-nams-rtse-mo and Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan) and his grandfather (Sa-chen Kun-

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suspicious in the mere fact that rGyal-tshab Dar-ma-rin-chen had composed a commentary on the *Ratnagotravibhāga*, though the Byams-chos-sde-lnga formed a very important part of the standard curriculum for all scholars in Tsong-kha-pa and rGyal-tshab's circles. Indeed, Matsumoto began his discussion (p. 17) by considering as lamentable any positive evaluation of Tantric doctrine, even asserting that the philosophical basis of Tantra was what Tsong-kha-pa was most critical of his whole life. It will be interesting to see how far this thesis can be developed with regard to the specifics of Tsong-kha-pa's career and writings as a Tāntrika, most notably his *sNgags rim chen mo*.

[211] According to Tāranātha, *sByor drug lhan thabs*, p. 754.3 (153b), Sa-paṇ's main meditative practice had been the *sByor drug*. I am indebted to Mr. Cyrus Stearns for this reference. The Sa-skya-pa tradition, however, would stress his practice of its own central tantric precepts such as the *Lam 'bras*.

[212] On Sa-paṇ's early studies and the sources thereon, see D. Jackson (1987), pp. 15ff and 24.

dga'-snying-po).[213] Once or twice it seems that Tantric doctrines influenced his interpretations of important topics even within a more general Mahāyāna context.[214]

One of the main principles Sa-paṇ appealed to for making his critical comments was that of genuine lineage. The importance of authentic origins and unbroken later transmission was recognized by all Tibetan Buddhist traditions, though especially by the Vajrayāna, and this principle, which is both religious and historical, opened another avenue for evaluating the authenticity of doctrines. For his own knowledge of Tantric precepts and practice, Sa-paṇ, too, had to depend in large part on the explanations given to him by competent masters who faithfully upheld the lineages in question.[215] When he noticed great divergences between two traditions claiming similar origins (or strong similarities between those claiming dissimilar origins), he considered himself entitled to ask what particular lineages both parties were following—i.e. what the "pedigree" of the teaching had been. In this way, questions about unusual or doubtful doctrines could sometimes be approached through a concrete historical question of origins. The answers given to such questions could also open the way for further investigations, because after one had identified the basic lineage of the other tradition, one could then pinpoint the contradictions between the original tradition and its later manifestation.

For Sa-paṇ and his tradition, it was essential for a Buddhist to preserve and maintain the core doctrines and vital practices of Indian Buddhism. He believed that to do this, a Buddhist adherent had to

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[213] On this editing work by Sa-paṇ, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 244, n. 15.

[214] See Sa-paṇ. *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*, p. 31.4.3 (62b), and D. Jackson (1990), p. 98, n. 94.

[215] Incidentally, Sa-paṇ himself is said by his biographer and student Lho-pa kun-mkhyen Rin-chen-dpal to have received Great Seal and Great Perfection instructions under sPyi-bo-lhas-pa, though no further details are given. See D. Jackson (1987), and pp. 27 and 36, n. 42. He himself mentions in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 656 =48a) his having received three lineages of Nāropa's Six Dharmas teachings, and in his *Nga brgyad ma'i 'grel pa*, p. 151.2.3 (*tha* 305a), he lists the Phyag-chen and rDzogs-chen among the instructions known among the "Elders of Tibet" (*bod bgres po*) that he had received, as opposed to those recognized among the great Tantric adepts of India: *gzhan yang rgya gar gyi grub pa thob pa'i mal 'byor gyi dbang phyug rnams la grags pa'i gdams ngag phal che ba dang/ bod bgres po rnams la grags pa'i bka' gdams pa dang/ zhi byed pa/ rdzogs pa chen po dang/ phyag rgya chen po la sogs pa nas gcod kyi bar du/ yongs su grags pa'i gdams ngag thams cad thos shing khong du chud pa dang/ lam de dag gi rim gyis pa dang/ cig char bar grags pa'i 'jug tshul thams cad kyang shes so//.*

discern carefully his own theory and practice from those of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions. In the realm of vows or ethics, three main traditions and several sub-traditions had been inherited from Buddhist India and should, in his view, be distinguished and kept distinct, even while practicing all of them. These main traditions were (1) the Vinaya system of monastic discipline belonging to the Śrāvaka tradition, (2) the Bodhisattva vow system belonging to the Pāramitāyāna, and (3) the Vajrayāna vows of the Tantras.[216] Sa-paṇ devoted one of his main works, the *sDom gsum rab dbye*, to discriminating these systems and to clarifying their interrelations. According to him, it vitiated the power of the respective traditions to blur these essential distinctions and to practice teachings of one system according to the principles of another.[217]

Sa-paṇ adhered, moreover, to the traditional opinion that Buddhist Mahāyāna doctrine in general should be carefully divided into two departments: (1) the common approach of the Bodhisattva path with its Perfections (*pāramitā*) and very long-term project, and (2) the special Mantrayāna approach, with its special short-cut methods and its cultivation of the two stages (*rim pa: krama*) of Tantric meditation. Both paths had as their goal the direct understanding of the ultimate or *śūnyatā* through meditation and the cultivation of compassionate skillful means, though the methods and ways of meditation were different for each. Within the general Mahāyāna, one sought to win insight into reality through the Madhyamaka theory (which could only be approached through preliminary learning and reflection) in connection with the cultivation of various other compassionate means and qualities.[218]

For the Mantra approach, the highest "non-elaboration" (*niṣprapañca: spros bral*) theory (i.e. the ultimate truth) to be known was the same as

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[216] See also sGam-po-pa's comments on the need for integrating the three vows within one person: Writings, vol. 1, pp. 158 and 163.6. 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, too, strongly insisted on this point, pointing to the example of both Atiśa and Phag-mo-gru-pa. See his collected works, vol. 2, pp. 63.4 and 343.2.

[217] As will be described more fully below, one of the extreme doctrines Sa-paṇ criticizes in this regard was a radical doctrinal relativism that maintained that all vehicles were true in their own context. *sDom gsum rab dbye* III 410 (36b-37a): *kha cig theg pa rang sa na// bden pa yin zhes kun la sgrogs//.*

[218] See also sGam-po-pa on the need for preliminary learning and reflection within the general Mahāyāna: Writings, vol. 1, pp. 211 and 216.6.

that of the Madhyamaka, but the methods for knowing it were different.[219] For practicing within the Mantrayāna, one had to be first formally initiated into the maṇḍala by a qualified master and there introduced to the insight into ultimate reality, which would gradually be intensified and stabilized through the two stages of Tantric meditative practice. Regarding the latter approach, Sa-paṇ wrote in his *Epistle to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions* (*Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas...*):[220]

> ...It is taught that the cultivation of the Great Seal is a Gnosis arisen from consecration and a special meditative absorption (*samādhi*) of the two stages [of Tantric meditation].

Or as he summed up in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 162-165):[221]

> Even though that meditation [of yours] may be excellent, it is not higher than the meditation of the Madhyamaka. Though that meditation of the Madhyamaka is indeed excellent, still it is very

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[219] Cf. sGam-po-pa, who as mentioned above is said to have claimed for his Great Seal method that it was superior to the "three great [traditions]" (*chen po gsum*): i.e. the Madhyamaka, the [Tantric] Great Seal, and the rDzogs-pa-chen-po. This threefold classification is cited by S. Karmay (1988), p. 197, who quotes the *dGongs gcig* commentary of rDo-rje-shes-rab (pp. 403-404), and also Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Legs bshad gser thur*, Collected Works, vol. 7, p. 84, and elsewhere.

Cf. also Rong-zom Paṇḍita Chos-kyi-bzang-po, who in his commentary on the *lTa ba'i phreng ba* attributed to Padmasambhava, p. 210, presented a discussion in which a (Tantra-based?) criticism of the Madhyamaka theory of *spros bral* was made, maintaining that it won't help to propound a second "free-from-elaborations" theory, higher than the first. The [Tantra or Great Perfection?] ultimate was not completely free from elaborations, it was alleged, for one could not deny that there existed such great qualities as the Gnoses or "Bodies" (*kāya*) of Buddhahood in ultimate truth.

[220] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas*, p. 326.2.3 (*na* 60b).

[221] Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye* III 162-165 (*na* 25b):
gal te de ni bsgom legs kyang// dbu ma'i bsgom las lhag pa med //
dbu ma'i bsgom de bzang mod kyi// (162) 'on kyang 'grub pa shin tu dka' //

ji srid tshogs gnyis ma rdzogs pa// de srid bsgom de mthar ma phyin//
'di yi tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa la// (163) bskal pa grangs med dgos par gsungs//

nged kyi phyag rgya chen po ni// dbang las byung ba'i ye shes dang//
rim pa gnyis kyi ting 'dzin las// (164) 'byung ba'i rang byung ye shes yin//

'di yi rtogs pa gsang sngags kyi// thabs la mkhas na tshe 'dir 'grub//
de las gzhan du phyag rgya che // (165) rtogs pa sangs rgyas kyis ma gsungs//.

> difficult to be understood. As long as the two preparatory assemblages are not completed, for so long will that meditative cultivation not reach perfection. Its completion of the two preparatory assemblages is taught to require an innumerable aeon. Our Great Seal is the Gnosis arisen from tantric consecration and the spontaneously arisen Gnosis that has arisen from the meditative absorption *(samādhi)* of the two stages. A realization of this can be achieved in this life if one is skilled in the means of the Mantra [teachings]. The Buddha taught no other understanding of the Great Seal besides that.

Moreover, according to Sa-paṇ and the tradition he followed, the term *mahāmudrā* did not belong or apply to the Pāramitāyāna Madhyamaka, but rather was properly used only within the Mantrayāna.

In brief, then, Sa-paṇ held that there were only two possible methods to penetrate and know the ultimate within Mahāyāna Buddhism. The first, viz. the slow method of the Bodhisattva on the general Mahāyāna path, was based on scripture and reasoning, and was approached through preliminary learning and reflection. The second, viz. the quick method of the Vajrayāna, was based on the initiations and instructions of a qualified Vajrayāna master and was carried out through the meditative practice of the two stages.



5

SA-PAṆ'S PRINCIPLES OF CRITICAL DOCTRINAL SCHOLARSHIP

The intellectual context of Sa-paṇ's controversial writings and also the broader background to the above discussions become still clearer the minute one begins to look into his aims and methods as a scholar of Buddhist religion and philosophy. One of Sa-paṇ's chief aims was carefully and critically to preserve and transmit the established traditions of Indian Buddhism. He overtly set forth much of his scholarly program for this purpose in the manual of scholarly practice he composed, namely the *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo (mKhas 'jug)*, and he also explicitly explained or implicitly utilized these methods in his other major doctrinal or philosophical treatises such as, most notably, the *sDom gsum rab dbye* and *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*. From what he stated in these and other works, one can see that his goals as a scholar and also the principles guiding his doctrinal criticisms derive from long-standing Indian Buddhist intellectual traditions. This should not be surprising for, as just mentioned, one of the things he urged most strongly was critical fidelity to genuine tradition.

In reading the following characterizations, however, one should keep in mind that Sa-paṇ was here discussing intellectual procedures that were recommended for the level of learning and reflecting, i.e. for the context of studying, teaching and debating within the general Mahāyāna. This method, however, did not apply directly to Tantric practice, and even in the non-Tantric Mahāyāna it was inadequate for the final steps when penetrating ultimate reality, in Sa-paṇ's view. For the latter task, conceptual mind would not do: at a higher stage, the only approach was through the concentrated direct insight of a yogi.[222] On this higher

[222] See for instance Sa-paṇ, *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*, ff. 63b-64a; KhJ I 34 (84.3.4); and KhJ III 37, autocommentary.

level, then, Sa-paṇ's Mahāyāna doctrine had more in common with the approach of sGam-po-pa, *et al.*, than with those Tibetan masters who taught that intellect could directly engage and fathom the ultimate.[223]

The Legitimacy of Doctrinal Criticisms

As a scholar of the general Mahāyāna, Sa-paṇ adhered to the Indo-Tibetan tradition that accepted, by and large, that debate or philosophical disputation between upholders of different traditions were legitimate and important ways for settling conflicting doctrinal claims. Such disputational activities formed in fact a necessary aspect of the career of many scholars in this tradition—just as necessary as, for instance, the explication of texts or the composition of treatises. The composition of a critical or controversial treatise combined in a single activity all three of the so-called "entrance gates for the wise"—i.e. composition, explication and debate—to which Sa-paṇ devoted his *mKhas 'jug* treatise.

In other words, Sa-paṇ held that there could be *principled* and justified controversy or doctrinal disputation, and that it was legitimate to engage in such discussions.[224] This point was accepted by Indian philosophy in general, and by Dharmakīrti and his school in particular, whose views later came to influence the whole Tibetan learned tradition. In Dharmakīrti's manual of disputation, the *Vādanyāya*, it is maintained that proper disputation is motivated by the desire to guard the truth and to defend

223 Cf. P. Williams (1992), pp. 196ff. Still more similarities would be found in the Mantrayāna traditions maintained by Sa-paṇ, but he does *not* discuss these in detail in this predominately non-Tantric context. For more on the opinion of Sa-paṇ and other Tibetan scholars on the role played by mind in knowing the absolute within the general Mahāyāna, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 396, n. 95. gTsang-nag-pa for instance held the opposing view that the ultimate could be reached through reasoning (*rigs pas myed pa*).

224 sGam-po-pa in his *Tshogs chos legs mdzes ma*, p. 187, by contrast, advises his followers to avoid sectarianism and not to indulge in criticisms of other religious traditions, specifying the great faults this would entail for both followers of Sūtra and Tantra. He does allow as an exception criticisms through which one rejects a lower philosophical theory and enters a higher one, as is mentioned in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, chapter 9. Cf. the much later Padma-dkar-po, *Phyag chen gan mdzod*, p. 189.3-6 (3a), who accepts the legitimacy of doctrinal criticisms and exhorts others not to get angry when their own traditions are criticized!

genuine tradition.[225] It should not be motivated just by the desire to win or to vanquish the opponent, and it must use honest methods: sound reasoning grounded in objective fact or based on the citation of scriptures accepted by the opponent was the sole criteria by which a definitive judgment could be reached.[226] It must also avoid ignoble and blameworthy methods such as trickery, deceit, slander, abusive language, etc.

Traditional Tibetan Buddhist scholars found it useful to differentiate carefully the criticism of a person (*gang zag*) from that of the doctrine (*chos*) he maintained. Within this tradition, even "minor" faults such as redundancy or irrelevancy were considered grounds for "defeat" during a formal debate, for the only legitimate function of a debater was soundly to state either the arguments proving his position or the reasoning that refuted the opponent.[227]

Sa-paṇ's criticisms were often phrased in rigorous, straightforward terms, and therefore some adherents of the traditions he criticized felt that he had overstepped the boundaries of mere doctrinal criticism, and that in doing so he must have been motivated by vindictive personal animosity.[228] Sa-paṇ himself had been fully aware that his motives for

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225 See T. M. Much (1991), pt. 1 (Skt.), pp. 22.22-23.1, and part 2 (German transl.), p. 51. See also E. Steinkellner (1988), pp. 1441-43. Sa-paṇ discusses this in his *Rigs gter rang 'grel* in the commentary to XI 3ab. See also his *mKhas pa rnams 'jug pa'i sgo*, III 12-13 (D. Jackson [1987], p. 329) and the references in the same publication, p. 378, n. 27. Sa-paṇ stresses there the fundamental motivation as being to maintain one's own doctrines honestly.

226 The situation was of course far more complicated in actual practice, because, as will be described below, both sides could maintain some scriptures which one of them interpreted for instance to be of only "provisional meaning" (*drang don*). To avoid a self-contradiction, they could interpret the contradictory scripture as not having "definitive meaning" (*nges don*).

227 This was stated by Dharmakīrti in the opening verse of his Vādanyāya. See M. T. Much (1991), part 1, p. 1; and part 2, p. 2. See also the *Rigs gter rang 'grel*, commentary on verse XI 4cd. See also D. Jackson (1987), p. 324 and n. 11.

228 sGam-po spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, for instance, attributes the criticisms of Sa-paṇ to a sheer wish to criticize, questioning whether Sa-paṇ was dispassionate in his criticism or uninfluenced by personal feelings, jealousy, etc. See L. Lhalungpa (1986), pp. 105f et passim; spyan-snga bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, p. 93b.6: *smra 'dod pa tsam du zad*, p. 94b.1: *rang gi zhe 'dod bden par sgrub pa'i rdzun rib kho nar snang ste/*, p. 94b.4: *ma nges bzhin du bsnyon nas smra ba gzur gnas rnams kyi spyod yul ma yin pa'i phyir/*, p. 97a.6: *phrag dog gis sgo nas sgro btags kyi skur 'debs smra bar mi rung*, etc. Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje also takes a similar tack at times. See the translation of D. Seyfort Ruegg (1988), pp. 1257 and

making such criticisms would be questioned, and therefore he devoted one of the final sections of the *sDom gsum rab dbye* to a discussion of the legitimate aims and motivations of doctrinal criticism as well as to the history of such criticisms in India and Tibet. At the end of the treatise, he listed the various religious lineages that he had received himself, and he denied accordingly that his criticisms were one-sidedly biased.[229] Before that, he declared that if perchance in an uncollected moment he has been guilty of any vilification of others, he renounced that as a morally reprehensible mistake.[230] But as he explained further:[231]

> If you say that the differentiation of erroneous from correct religion is anger and jealousy, in that case, how [otherwise] are sentient beings to be saved from the ocean of cyclic existence?

To differentiate carefully right doctrines from wrong was thus for Sa-paṇ crucial to the task of maintaining the Buddhist Doctrine, and thus for making possible liberation itself.

1262, and Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje, pp. 11 and 15 (6a.3 and 8a.5). Padma-dkar-po too becomes on occasion quite exuberant in his criticisms, terming Sa-paṇ's comments "a madman's words" (*smyon pa'i tshig*) in his *Phyag chen gan mdzod*, pp. 580.1 (198b) or as "the mad leaping of a Tibetan" (*bod smyon mchong*), *ibid.*, p. 589.3 (203a). In his *Klan ka gzhom pa'i gtam*, p. 563 (*zha nga* 6a) he states that the mere objections (*klan ka*) of a biased ordinary individual (*so so skye bo*) cannot disprove anything because such people praise their own side and dispraise the positions of others: *so so skye bo dag ni rang gi la bstod/ gzhan phyogs la smod pas/ de dag gis klan ka tsam gyis ci la gnod/* and adds that there is no use gazing with the blind eye of bias: *phyogs 'dzin zhar ba'i mig des bltas kyang ci//.*

[229] Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye* III 660 = p. 320.3.6 (*na* 48a):
de phyir chos rnams phal cher thos// des na bdag la phyogs lhung med//
de phyir gzu bos dpyad pa 'di// blo ldan rnams kyis 'di ltar zung//

[230] *Ibid.*, III 625 = p. 319.4.4 (46b.4):
bdag ni sems can kun la byams// gang zag kun la bdag mi smod//
brgya la mnyam par ma bzhag pas// smad pa srid na'ang sdig de bshags//

[231] *Ibid.* III 633, p. 320.1.2 (47a.2):
chos log pa dang ma log pa'i// rnam par dbye ba byas pa la//
sdang dang phrag dog yin zer na// 'o na 'khor ba'i rgya mtsho las//
sems can rnams ni ji ltar bsgral//
Cf. also above, 46b.

Justification for this Approach in Sa-paṇ's *Epistle to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas*

In another of his critical writings, the shorter but very important *Epistle to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions* (*Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas...*), he explains and justifies the background and principles of his critical work, as he himself understood them. These are degenerate times, he states, and most of the Buddha's doctrine has already disappeared from the world. In Tibet in particular, there have proliferated a swarm of erroneous opinions, whereas genuine doctrines as well as their practitioners receive little honor or support. The teachings of the great masters of India are purposefully avoided, while the false opinions of (Tibetan) impostors are widely spread among the ignorant as "teachings of Tantric adepts (*siddha*)." In this depressing situation, he chose to play an active role, based first of all upon learning and understanding:[232]

> [In] the world, possessors of discriminative understanding are rare. Possessors of merit are extremely few. Therefore upholders of the jewel of the Noble Doctrine, Your scriptures, are rare.
> Having understood that, and fearing that the Shākya [Sage]'s doctrine would disappear, I studied most of the scriptures and [ways of] reasoning, in order to learn well myself and intending to benefit others, too.
> By virtue of that, I have understood a bit about the establishment of what is erroneous and non-erroneous regarding the essentials of religion.

He then invokes the Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, learned masters and adepts as his witnesses, saying that he will explain to them what criticisms he has made, and upon what basis.[233]

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[232] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas*, p. 324.2.3 (*na* 56b):
'jig rten shes rab ldan pa dkon// bsod nams ldan pa shin tu nyung//
des na dam chos rin po che// khyed kyi gsung rab 'dzin pa dkon//

de ltar shes nas shākya yi// bstan pa nub par dogs pa dang//
bdag nyid legs par sbyang phyir dang// gzhan la phan par bsam nas ni//

lung dang rigs pa phal cher sbyangs// de yi stobs kyis chos kyi gnad//
'khrul pa dang ni ma 'khrul pa'i// rnam gzhag cung zad bdag gis go//

[233] *Ibid.*, pp. 324.2.6-3.4 (*na* 56b-57a):
des na bdag gi 'thad mi 'thad// re zhig gsan par mdzad du gsol//

Therefore I beg You to listen briefly to [these statements] of mine [about what is] "correct" and "incorrect."
In your word, the following is stated: "Monks or learned scholars should accept my word having investigated it like gold, through burning, cutting and rubbing, but [should] not [accept it merely] out of reverence."[234]
Moreover, [I] have kept in mind what is stated in a Sūtra, namely: "You should not condemn that which is worthy of praise, and you should not praise that which is worthy of condemnation."[235]
I have also understood as true that which Ratnākara[śānti] said: "A lack of faith is the chief of enemies; an excess of faith is an occasion for great delay. That is because the omniscience [of a Buddha] is understood through correct cognition (*pramāṇa*); through devotion, there will not come about omniscience."[236]

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khyed kyi gsung las 'di skad 'byung// dge slong dag gam mkhas rnams kyis//

bsreg bcad bdar ba'i gser bzhin du// yongs su brtags la nga yi bka'//
blang bar bya yi gus phyir min// zhes gsungs gzhan yang mdo sde las//

bstod 'os smad par mi bya zhing// smad 'os bstod par mi bya zhes//
gsungs pa de yang yid la bzhag// slob dpon rin chen 'byung gnas kyis//

dad pa med pa gtso bo'i sgra (=dgra?)// lhag dad shin tu gol ba'i gnas//
gang phyir kun mkhyen tshad mas grub// gus pas kun mkhyen 'gyur ba min//

zhes gsungs de yang bden pa rtogs// de bzhin sde snod thams cad dang/
bstan bcos chen po thams cad las// 'khrul pa thams cad 'bad pas bkag//

ma 'khrul pa rnams sgrub par mthong// dam pa'i rnam thar bskyang 'dod nas//
bdag kyang de yi rjes 'brangs te// chos kyi rnam dbye cung zad byas//

de la blo gros ldan pa yi// sde snod 'dzin pa phal cher dga'//
thos med blo gros bral ba yi// chags sdang ldan rnams phal cher smod//.

[234] This quotation is also quoted by Tsong-kha-pa near the beginning of his *Drang nges legs bshad snying po*. R. A. F. Thurman (1984), p. 190, n. 12, located the quote also in Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha*. See also Donald S. Lopez (1988), p. 5.

[235] Not yet identified.

[236] I have not yet identified the source, but here Ratnākaraśānti was speaking in a non-Tantric context. Near the beginning of his *Prajñāpāramitopadeśa* (Peking 5579, *Shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i man ngag*), *sems tsam, ku* 151b.2, he contrasts the approaches of the Tantric and non-Tantric Mahāyāna, specifying that the former is easier, quicker, and for those whose minds are "increased" (made strong) through faith (*dad pas rnam par 'phel ba'i blo can rnams*). The Bodhisattva's path produces its fruit through long difficulties, and

Accordingly, I have seen that in all the divisions (or "baskets") of scripture and in all the great treatises, all errors have been energetically refuted, [and] that which is not erroneous is established. Desiring to lead a noble life, I too have followed that [doctrine] and have made a few discriminations of religious doctrine.
Most intelligent upholders of the scriptures are pleased by that. [But] most unlearned, unintelligent, angry and passionate people speak ill of it.

Procedures and Principles of Debate

The main function of debate or legitimate "controversy," as Sa-paṇ conceived it, was to preserve and defend established tradition, i.e. the Buddha's doctrine. Whether in a formal debate or a critical composition, the aim should be to uphold the established tenets of a valid and recognized tradition. Sa-paṇ explained this when he set out step by step the following ground rules of formal debate.

Preparatory Steps of Debate

Disputation should be done methodically, he tells us in section III of his *mKhas 'jug*, beginning by identifying and observing the roles of those taking part. The two main participants in a debate are: (a) a proponent who maintains his own tradition, and (b) a respondent who tries to refute that. The third participant, likewise essential to the debate, is an arbiter who impartially witnesses and judges the debate.[237]

The proponent who takes part in a disputation should do so motivated by the wish to protect the Doctrine (KhJ III 1). In fact, all doctrinal debate should be for the sake of "making known the unmistaken facts of the matter, with the aim of maintaining one's own doctrine" (KhJ III 12). It should not be motivated by desire and hatred, or aim at just attaining

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it is the first path for those possessing the strength of burning energy (*brtson 'grus 'bar ba'i stobs ldan*). Those Bodhisattvas who for the sake of Awakening practice for long periods through extreme difficulties are heroes, he thinks. For a synopsis of this interesting work, see S. Katsura (1976).

[237] For an English translation of this passage of the KhJ, see D. Jackson (1987), pp. 323ff.

victory for oneself or vanquishing the opponent. Why? Because the latter sort of disputation will not protect the Doctrine, and it will develop into anger and enmity, which are the causes for rebirths in evil destinies.

Generally speaking, then, one should practice disputation that "accords with Dharma" (i.e. agrees with moral or religious principle); it should be the debate of a "noble person." Elsewhere Sa-paṇ explained what such religiously principled debate meant, and stated that a noble person such as the Buddha could thus not be meaningfully opposed in principled debate.[238]

All criticisms should thus be made by truthfully and straightforwardly stating the defects of the opponent's established philosophical tenets (KhJ III 13). They should *not* be made in any other way. Sa-paṇ specifically rejects as illegitimate such methods as: attacks against personal faults, through deceit, self-praise, abusing others, tormenting others, maintaining one's tenets merely out of attachment, caviling against other's tenets out of hatred, and all stratagems that are neither sincere nor to the point, such as nonsensical prattle, laughter, dancing, talking too fast to be intelligible, etc., etc. These all amounted to a defeat for oneself if one practiced them, but they were not capable of defeating the opponent. The latter point was particularly important, and Sa-paṇ also explicitly rejected all deceitful means as incapable of upholding a doctrine. Not only does deceit fail as a defence, he says, but it makes the defended doctrine itself impure (KhJ III 14). For example, in debate it is going too far if one party cries out "I have won" merely because the opponent is sitting there silently. If the mere occurrence of silence could decide the outcome, then might would make right: it would be enough to threaten or otherwise intimidate the opponent until he became speechless. Such manipulations obviously have no place in the sincere pursuit of truth.

A System of Established Tenets should be Maintained

In doctrinal debate, it was assumed that the participants each belonged to an established school or tradition, and that in the debate each would maintain his respective system of established philosophical tenets (*grub mtha': siddhānta*). Debaters should explicitly affirm which system of tenets they maintain. When Sa-paṇ spoke of these "established tenets," he had

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[238] Sa-paṇ. ThGS, p. 46.4.2 (92a).

in mind the four main Indian Buddhist systems or the various recognized non-Buddhist systems of India. (The Tibetan Buddhist schools were not considered to have their own *siddhānta*, and in this period their identities as separate doctrinal entities were less rigidly defined than they became later.)

Sa-paṇ mentioned (KhJ III 38-39) the exceptional case of some Mādhyamikas who attempt to refute others without advancing or professing a system of established tenets. Furthermore he had already stated (KhJ III 17-18) that when one does maintain the established tenets of a system, one is only required to maintain those tenets that one advances at that time and that are immediately relevant to the topic at hand. One did not have to maintain all statements ever put forward on any topic whatsoever by every single master within one's own philosophical school.

The importance of identifying and maintaining a genuine Buddhist tradition could hardly be stated more clearly than by Sa-paṇ when he described what for him constituted a doctrine that could be legitimately learned or taught (KhJ II 3, autocommentary):[239]

> As for the religious doctrine to be learned, one must study and expound that religious doctrine that the Buddha proclaimed, that has come down through a succession of learned masters, that was cultivated through meditation by the Tantric adepts (*siddhas*), that was expounded by the great scholars (*paṇḍitas*), that was translated [from Sanskrit to Tibetan] by translators, and that is well known among all the Indian and Tibetan learned adherents to the scriptural traditions.

The Illegitimacy of Doctrinal Inventions

In this very traditionally minded context, all innovations were considered illegitimate by definition. As Sa-paṇ went on to say:[240]

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[239] Sa-paṇ, KhJ II autocommentary, p. 94.4.6-95.1.2 (*tha* 190b.6-191a). See also D. Jackson (1987), p. 12, n. 20. A similar approach is said to have been officially decreed after the bSam-yas debate. See dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba, vol. 1, p. 380: *lo tsās ma bsgyur paṇḍi tas ma bshad// rgyal pos bka' btags sbyin bdag ma byas pa'i// chos la spyad du mi rung bka' khrims bsgrags//*. On the twofold criteria for acceptance—namely, the existence of a genuine Indian source and of a valid transmission—see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 131, and (1966), p. 27f.

[240] Sa-paṇ, KhJ, p. 95.1.2 (191a).

> If [the doctrine] is not such [an authentic one], the learned masters of India will deride it, and they will disapprove, saying: "The Buddha taught no such religious doctrine. To expound a religious doctrine of one's own fabrication harms the Doctrine." Even nowadays I see the learned masters of India delighting in the correct exposition of scriptures and reasoning by Tibetans. [And] I see them deriding those [teachings] that are not in harmony with scripture and reasoning, saying: "[This] is not the Doctrine of the Buddha."

Tibetan novelties and inventions were thus, for him, unacceptable in principle, and in this he saw himself as agreeing with the Indian masters of his time. Implicit in this rejection of new doctrines was the idea that the Buddha had taught his Doctrine well and completely, and that the basic philosophical positions had already been worked out by the various Indian schools on all topics considered most important. Newly formulated ideas or interpretations that had no affiliation to any existing system of tenets were not worthy of serious refutation. Therefore, simply to demonstrate that a doctrine had no ascertainable origin or no authentic source among the established systems was enough to discredit it. It held no water to say "But this is my guru's teaching!" if such a teaching ignored or contradicted the original doctrine of that school (DS III 513 = 41b). Sa-paṇ appeals to this principle that innovations are bogus in principle at least twice in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* (DS III 481 and 514 = 40a and 41b).

An important corollary of this was that one should be able to show that the tenet or point of doctrine one maintained had a recognized place in the system of religious practice or philosophical tenets that one upheld. If it could be shown to be no innovation, then the opponent was obliged to refute it by other reasoning, while maintaining himself his own system of established tenets (cf. DS III 482 = 40a). Incompatibilities between *siddhānta* systems should be resolved through reasoning (DS III 489 = 40b; KhJ III 40).

Having asserted that teachings without established origins were not really worthy of being contested in debate, Sa-paṇ nevertheless conceded that sometimes it was permissible or even desireable to refute them. He feared that if they were allowed to spread unchecked, such teachings might proliferate so widely that they would crowd out the true doctrine, like rank weeds choking out the desired crops. As he said in the KhJ (III

41-42):[241]

> The philosophical tenets that are adhered to by learned men are two: Buddhist and non-Buddhist. [Anything] besides those are tenets that have been haphazardly considered [or constructed] by the ignorant. (KhJ III 41)
>
> .... Thus these two are suitable as objects for learned persons to prove or refute. But new philosophical tenets that are other than these and that were fabricated by ignorant persons are empty of reasoning [and] in contradiction with the scriptures. [They are] falsehoods concocted by "non-virtuous friends" [i.e. sham spiritual teachers] for the sake of [acquiring] the necessities of life, [and they are] tenets upheld by ignorant people out of desire and hatred. But since they originate from no authentic source, they are indeed unworthy of refutation or proof.
>
> Nevertheless, if errors spread excessively like weeds [growing] in a field, they will hurt the doctrine of the Buddha. Consequently one should appropriately refute them by means of scripture and reasoning. For even if passionate and angry fools do not understand, it will be understood by learned men who dwell in rectitude.
>
> Here in the Land of Glaciers there also exist many tenets of ignorant people that are different from [the tenets of the Buddhists and non-Buddhist Indian sectarians]. Because ignorant people can easily understand [those], learned men have usually ignored them. (KhJ III 42)

In the *sDom gsum rab dbye* he went even further, stating that if a doctrine contradicted *dharma* (religious principle), it *should* be refuted through scripture and reasoning (DS III 510-11 = 41b). Moreover, he argued that if one accepted a fabricated doctrine, one would thereby lose the basis for rejecting other false doctrines. As he stated (DS I 241-243):[242]

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241 Sa-paṇ, KhJ 51b; D. Jackson (1987), pp. 273 and 343f.

242 Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye*, I 240-243 (13b-14a):
sangs rgyas gsung dang mi mthun yang// 'di 'dra bden par 'dod na ni //
lag len phyin ci log gzhan yang// (241) *'khrul zhes brjod par mi nus te//*
lung dang 'gal ba'i chos yin par// rang bzor thams cad mtshungs pa la//
'ga' zhig bden la 'ga' zhig ni// (242) *brdzun pa yin zhes dpyad mi rung//*
mu stegs la sogs chos log kyang// sun dbyung bar ni mi nus te//
lung rigs med par mtshungs pa la// (243) *bden brdzun dbye ba nus ma yin//*

If you maintain that such [erroneous practices] are true even though they do not accord with the Buddha's word, then you will not be able to say about other erroneous practices either that they are false. For, being doctrines which contradict authoritative scripture, they all are alike in being inventions, and it is not acceptable to investigate them, saying "Some are true" and "Some are false." Nor will you be able to refute erroneous doctrines such as those of the Indian non-Buddhist sectarians, for you will not be able to differentiate true from false, since [both your and their traditions] will be alike in their lacking authoritative scripture and reasoning.

The Only Two Criteria: Scripture and Reasoning

There were only two means for decisively rejecting or accepting tenets: logical reasoning and scriptural quotation.[243] Mastering this pair was the basis for his own critical scholarship.[244] These means also had to be applied consistently and universally; otherwise, as Sa-paṇ maintained in the passage just quoted, one would lose the basis and possibility for refuting other erroneous doctrines (DS I 242-3).[245]

Reasoning

Legitimate controversial discussion should be conducted in accordance with the long-established traditions of Buddhist epistemology and logic, the high points of which were Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, but which had a history of development even before them. It was agreed that when one

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[243] On the limitations of these two, see 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Collected Works, vol. 4, p. 409, where Atiśa is quoted.

[244] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i*, p. 324.2.4-5 (*na* 56b):
khyed kyi gsung rab 'dzin pa dkon// de ltar shes nas shākya yi//
bstan pa nub par dogs pa dang// bdag nyid legs par sbyang phyir dang//
gzhan la phan par bsams nas ni// lung dang rigs pa phal cher sbyangs//
de yi stobs kyis chos kyi gnod// 'khrul ba dang ni ma 'khrul ba'i//
rnam gzhag cung zad bdag gis go//.
See also the brief work *Lung rigs rnam dag...* that he devoted precisely to this topic (as will be summarized below).

[245] Sa-paṇ, DS I 242-3 = *na* 13b-14a.

argued in favor of a certain tenet, one's argumentation had to be stated in the form of sound inferences or formal statements of proof. The subject of the inference had to be acknowledged by both sides, and the reason had to be based on objective grounding or on scripture maintained by both sides or at least by the opponent. The reasoning should be logically consistent and be free from the recognized logical fallacies.

Identifying Logical Flaws. The main job of the critic was to identify the logical flaws in the opponent's statements of proof. These flaws, when occurring in the formally stated inference, were the failure of any of the three logical characteristics or "forms" (*tshul gsum: trairūpya)* of a sound reason. Otherwise, when examining the opponent's general reasoning or interpretation, other fallacies of a more general nature could also be identified, such as:

(1) logical inconsistency (*'gal*) (DS I 17 = f. 3a; I 119-120 = 8a)
(2) logical or semantic "overextension" (*ha cang thal bar 'gyur: atiprasaṅga*) (KhJ III 14, autocommentary; DS I 83 =6a; II 28 = 15b, etc.)
(3) infinite regression (*thug med: anavasthā)* (DS II 28 = 15b)
(4) the entailment of some other undesired and absurd consequence (*thal 'gyur: prasaṅga*)

Sometimes Sa-paṇ also criticized the opponent's reasoning more generally, describing it as rash or unconsidered (*gzu lum*). (DS I 201 =12a)

Problems of Terminology or Semantics. Sometimes Sa-paṇ identified a problem in the opponent's designation of terms. Some terms might be generally inappropriate or unacceptable (*mi 'thad*) for reaching the opponent's interpretation, or the concepts implied by the terms might be incompatible (*'gal*) for reaching the opponent's interpretation (DS I 86-7 = 6b). One specific problem of designation that he identified was that in which a positive designation had been erroneously imputed to a thing based merely on the absence of a thing's opposite (DS I 77-81 = 6a). Or two Tibetan technical terms that the opponent understood as different might be explained as synonymous, being merely different renderings of the same Sanskrit original term (DS III 392 = 36a).

Sometimes, too, Sa-paṇ found it necessary to distinguish between a mere designation, and the thing as properly defined (*mtshan nyid pa*) (ThGS 73b). It was of no use to quibble over mere designations or

terminology.[246]

Exhausting the Logical Possibilities. A general method of argumentation that Sa-paṇ used on occasion was the typical scholastic procedure of analyzing or examining a subject in a way that exhausted all logical possibilities (DS I 122 = 8a). One way to do this was to reduce the matter to an either/or choice between two mutually exclusive possibilities, for instance A and non-A (DS II 38 = 16a). This employed the law of excluded middle.

Replies. In debate, the reply consisted of identifying the logical fault of the opponent's proof. In other contexts, objections of the opponent could be answered either through the actual direct reply (*lan rnal ma* or *lan dngos*) or through parallel reasoning that answers "in kind" (*mgo bsgre* or *mgo snyoms*) (DS I 222-225 = 13a; ThGS 10a-b).[247]

Scriptural Quotation

Quotation of scriptures was the basic way for giving additional support to one's argument in debate or discussion. Moreover, when dealing with extremely difficult matters, scripture was the *only* recourse, since inference based on objective facts gained through direct perception could not prove anything regarding the "completely hidden" objects such as Buddhahood, the dharmadhātu, etc., those objects being inaccessible to direct perception. Still, scripturally or consensually based logical marks (*yid ches pa'i rtags*) should not contradict the ordinary *pramāṇa*s of direct perception and inference. And they could not be cited against followers of other traditions who did not maintain them as their own.

Scripture and tradition *required* an authentic origin for them to be valid (DS III 135 = 24a-b).[248] In other words, to have any force, a

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[246] A detailed theory of designation (analogous to the system of analyzing an intentional statement) was utilized by the later Sa-skya-pa scholar Go-rams-pa (1429-1489) in his *lTa ba'i shan 'byed*.

[247] See also D. Jackson (1987), p. 434f.

[248] As mentioned above, sGam-po-pa too acknowledged the need for a genuine origin and a valid lineal transmission. See his works, vol. 1, p. 216.4: *brgyud pa dang mi ldan na gdam ngag khyad par can mi 'byung ba'i skyon yod do| |.*

quotation had to have originated from a work that was recognized as belonging to an established corpus of authoritative writings (such as a Sūtra, Tantra, or recognized *śāstra*) or as belonging to the writings of a recognized master. Conversely, if a doctrine was nowhere to be found in the authentic scriptures, it was unacceptable (DS III 388 = 38b-39a). Just what constituted the general Buddhist canon or corpus of accepted translations of Indian Buddhist writings had not yet been firmly established in Sa-paṇ's day, and this complicated matters. The *bKa' 'gyur* and *bsTan 'gyur* canonical collections as we now know them had yet to be compiled. Still, Sa-paṇ is said to have made some contributions to the process by rejecting a number of apocryphal Sūtras from the proto-canon.[249]

The Danger of Apocrypha. Sa-paṇ considered the possibility of meeting with inauthentic scriptures to be very real. As he apparently knew from experience, some putative translations of Indian Sūtras and Tantras were definitely later Tibetan forgeries. Sa-paṇ in his works even names a few of such spurious works.[250] To cite them and to try to trace back their origins to the Buddha Vajradhara (in the case of Vajrayāna texts) was an occasion for self-contradiction, he held (DS III 508-9 = 41b). He listed the following types of inauthentic works:

(1) volumes recovered from hidden caches (*gter nas byung ba'i glegs bam*)
(2) religious traditions stolen from others (*gzhan nas brkus pa'i chos lugs*)

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[249] See D. Jackson (1987), p. 13, n. 22.

[250] Sa-paṇ, DS III 539 = 42b-43a; and see also Go-rams-pa's *sDom gsum rab dbye'i rnam bshad*, p. 193.2. See further Sa-paṇ's comments in his *Chag lo'i zhus lan*, 232a: *bod na'ang mdo bskul sgog skya ma bya ba la sogs pa mang po gda' ste/,* and 234b: *dri ba bcu gcig pa gsang sngags gsar rnying la bod kyis sbyar ba'i rgyud sde gang lags gsungs pa'ang/ sngags rnying ma la lha mo skye rgyud dang/ bum ril thod mkhar la sogs pa shin tu mang bar gda'/ gsar ma la bod kyis sbyar ba'i rgyud dus 'byung dang/ phyag na rdo rje mkha' 'gro dang/ ra li nyi shu rtsa bzhi la sogs pa shin tu mang po brjod kyis mi lang ba cig gda' ste/ thams cad gsal ba ston na phog thug pag tsam yod par gda' bas khyed nyid kyis dpyod mdzod/*. 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin's controversial treatise also listed numerous questionable works, especially of the Old School. This critique was quoted verbatim by Shākya-mchog-ldan in his *sDom gsum dris lan legs bshad gser gyi thur ma*, but this led to further questions, to which he gave his definitive replies in his Collected Writings, vol. 17, pp. 528ff.

(3) doctrines one has composed [oneself] (*brtsams chos*)
(4) doctrines based on dreams (*rmi lam chos*)
(5) doctrines which had been [merely?] memorized (*blo bzung ba yi chos lugs*)

Scriptural Contradictions. When the participants in a debate both maintained the same scriptures, they could use them against each other. But if the two disputants came from different traditions, then only the other party's own scriptures could be used against him, and not one's own. As he stated in the *sKyes bu dam pa* (333.2.6 = *na* 75a): "If you do not contradict the established tenets that you yourself maintain, then there is no harm even if you contradict (read: *'gal*) the established tenets maintained by others." It was likewise pointless to quote one's own scriptures against the opponent if the latter did not accept them as his own (DS III 491 = 40b; KhJ III 31-32). To disprove an opponent through scripture, one always had to show him to be in *self-contradiction*. For instance, one could cite the texts or early teachers of a lineage to refute the later followers of the same lineage (DS II 6 = 14b; III 490-1 = 40b, 496-8 = 41a). Therefore, it was necessary to determine from the beginning what the opponent's basic lineage or school was.

Interpretation as the Main Escape from Apparent Scriptural Self-Contradictions. If in the course of a debate or controversy, one disputant was charged with being in contradiction with his own scriptures, and there did indeed seem to be a contradiction, he needed then to be able to explain these contradictions as being merely apparent and not real (KhJ III 33). In order to reply satisfactorily, he needed to show the true intended sense of the scripture, and therefore it was necessary to draw certain hermeneutical distinctions, such as between scriptures spoken with a hidden or ulterior intention and those simply spoken directly with no special intention. The debater had to be able to show for instance that the scripture in question was not literally binding because it was spoken with a special or hidden motive. Sa-paṇ also mentioned these hermeneutical principles near the end of section II of the KhJ, because they were presupposed for successful explication of scripture through the method of "objections and replies":[251]

[251] Sa-paṇ, KhJ, pp. 101.2.2 = 203b.

> Through [the method of] objections and replies, one should establish the purport of the text by means of scripture and reasoning. (KhJ II 33)

There exist words and meanings that are extremely weighty and difficult to understand, apparent mixtures of non-Buddhist Indian Sectarian and Buddhist established tenets, and many subjects for debate regarding the differences of theory and practice not only between the Greater and Lesser Vehicles of Buddhism, but also within the Lesser Vehicle, between the four basic monastic communities and the eighteen schools that developed from them. And also within the Great Vehicle, there are differences between the Perfections (Pāramitā) and Mantra [approaches], and there are many apparent contradictions of established tenets such as in the Perfection (Pāramitā) [Vehicle] between Yogācāra and Madhyamaka, and within the Mantra between the four classes of Tantras. Consequently, one should expound by establishing [one's subject] through [stating] the objections [of opponents] and the replies [of one's own school], making use of both scriptural quotations and logical reasoning. For if on such occasions one does not ascertain [the matter] through objections and replies, one will not know wrong doctrine from right.

> That person who knows the "six alternatives" is extremely learned at explaining texts. (KhJ II 34)[252]

For the explanation of major scriptures, one needs to know the "six alternatives" [or six principles of interpretation], which are: (1) special intention (*dgongs pa*), (2) without special intention (*dgongs pa ma yin pa*), (3) provisional meaning (*drang ba'i don*), (4) definitive meaning (*nges pa'i don*), (5) literal (*sgra ji bzhin pa*), and (6) non-literal (*sgra ji bzhin ma yin pa*).[253]

(1.) Statements [having] special intention. By understanding the four intentions (*dgongs pa*, Sanskrit *abhiprāya*) such as "sameness" (*samatā*) and the four allusions (*ldem dgongs*, Sanskrit *abhisaṃdhi*) such as "the allusion of introduction" (*avatāraṇābhisaṃdhi*), one will understand the apparently contradictory words and meanings of the

[252] Sa-paṇ, KhJ, pp. 101.2.5ff = 203b ff.

[253] On these principles, see for instance E. Steinkellner (1978), pp. 541f, and M. Broido (1983). Sa-paṇ mentions these principles elsewhere too. See KhJ III 23, autocommentary, and D. Jackson (1987), p. 385, n. 56.

Buddhas and bodhisattvas, and therefore they will become non-contradictory. I have not written on these in detail, fearing that [my text will become] excessively long. Therefore [to learn more,] one should refer to such works as the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* [Skt. XII 16-18].

(2.) Statements without special intention are words and meanings that themselves directly convey the intended import of the Buddha without one's having to seek another special intention as above.

(3.) [Provisional meaning] is [found in teachings given] for the sake of assisting some sentient beings. [Such teachings,] though not the truth, conform with those [sentient beings'] dispositions, and gladden and lead their minds, and serve as the basis for them afterwards to enter into definitive meaning.

(4.) Definitive meaning is the sense that is correctly understood by individuals of sharp capacities through following the words themselves. One should understand the preceding two [types of meaning] in more detail from such [scriptures] as the *Saṃdhinirmocana* [*Sūtra*].

[Objection:] All the Buddha's words are of definitive meaning alone, but they cannot possibly be of interpretable meaning, for if there were such a thing as interpretable meaning it would mean that the Buddha uttered falsehoods.[254] [Reply:] Those persons [who say this] are simply ignorant of the intent of the Sūtras and Tantras. For if [all the Buddha's utterances] were exclusively of definitive meaning, the different doctrinal systematizations such as the three *kāyas*, the three "baskets of scripture" (*tripiṭaka*), and the three trainings (*triśikṣā*) would for the most part contradict each other, and how could there be disparate doctrinal systematizations in the definitive meaning of ultimate truth? [Such doctrinal differences] were established based on conventional usage, the surface-level truth, [and] provisional meaning.

Furthermore, if such statements [by the Buddha] as "I have perfectly understood all dharmas ...," and also: "I have become wholly awakened. There exists nobody like me....' were of definitive meaning, infinitely great faults would be entailed. For instance, there would be the consequence of [the Buddha's] postulating a self like the non-

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[254] This is the *dgongs gcig* ("single intention") doctrine of 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po. See the latter's Collected Works, vol. 4, pp. 409-410, where he specifically speaks against analyzing according to the "six alternatives" and states, "All is definitive meaning alone" (*thams cad nges don 'ba' zhig pas...*). Later *dGongs gcig* commentators explained how *this* was to be interpreted.

Buddhist Indian sectarian, and also his indication of past and future would establish the three times as substances.

(5.) Literal [expressions] are those that signify the sense in exact accordance with the words, such as [the words] "the salutary" (*dge ba*) and "the preparatory accumulations [or 'equipment'] of merit and Gnosis," and such statements as: "Generosity leads to the enjoyment of wealth, and moral discipline leads to happiness."[255]

(6.) The non-literal consists of words that signify something different [from their usual referent], such as the line "father and mother are to be killed."[256] And instances of [such non-literal usages] are found in the Sūtras and Tantras, and in some poetical treatises. Fearing that [the present work] will grow too large, I have not written in detail about these methods [here]. If one does not know the "six alternatives," one will err whether teaching Sūtra or Tantra, for as Candrakīrti said:[257]

> "Whoever says that he has definite understanding without the 'six alternatives' is just like someone who, wanting to look at the moon, looks at the tips of his fingers."

Sa-paṇ employed these six "alternatives" or "limits" in various passages of his *sDom gsum rab dbye* and other doctrinal writings in order to interpret the scriptures and to refute their erroneous interpretation. He often employed these principles separately in other combinations or separate pairs, not counting them as a set of six:

(1) Types of "explicational statement" (*bshad pa*). He divided these into three types: (DS I 139-40 = 9a; III 416 = 37a): (a) having a special intention (*dgongs pa*), (b) having a hidden intention (i.e. as allusion) (*ldem por dgongs*), and (c) having straightforward intent (*drang por dgongs*).

(2) Types of meaning (*don*): definitive (*nges don*) or provisional (i.e. indirect) meaning (*drang don*) (DS I 142-3 = 9a; III 411 = 37a). Sometimes he identified a scripture as having one or the other kind of meaning. He showed for instance the faulty identification

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[255] Cf. KhJ III 20, autocommentary, and D. Jackson (1987), p. 383, n. 50.

[256] See also KhJ III 24 and D. Jackson (1987), p. 386, n. 58.

[257] This was probably from Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotanā*: *sGron ma gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba'i rgya cher 'grel pa* (P. vol. 137, no. 2650). The exact quotation has not yet been located, though the work refers many times to the application of the "six alternatives."

of provisional as definitive (DS I 155-6 = 9b-10a). He also strongly objected to the notion that all scriptures were of definitive meaning.

(3) Types of expression: literal (*sgra ji bzhin*) or non-literal (*sgra ji bzhin ma yin pa*) (DS III 411 = 37a). These two overlapped closely with 1(c) and 1(ab) respectively.

In addition, Sa-paṇ utilized a number of other basic distinctions to classify scriptures, doctrines or practices in his DS and elsewhere. To list some of the main ones here:

(1) Different "Vehicle": mundane (*'jig rten*) or supramundane (*'jig rten las 'das*) (DS III 412 = 37a, 523-4 = 42b)
(2) Buddhist versus non-Buddhist doctrine or practice (DS I 143 =9a; cf. ThGS 48b)
(3) Different systems of established tenets (*siddhānta: grub mtha'*) (DS I 19-20)
(4) Different categories of Buddhist doctrine: theory (*lta ba*) versus practical conduct (*spyod pa*) or meditative cultivation (*sgom pa*) (DS III 518ff = 42b).
(5) Different levels or classes of Buddhist vows (*sdom pa*), i.e. distinguishing among the three classes of vows: Pratimokṣa, Bodhisattva, and Mantra. He clearly distinguished between the Śrāvaka Pratimokṣa and the Bodhisattva vows (DS I 1-3 = 2a; I 35-39 = 4a; I 151-154 = 9b) or between the Pratimokṣa and the Mantra (DS I 27 = 3b)
(6) Different levels of truth: surface (*kun rdzob*) versus ultimate (*don dam*) (DS III 70-71 = 21a-b)
(7) Different levels of doctrinal importance, i.e. whether a teaching is an essential or crucial doctrine (*gnad*) or merely an incidental one (DS III 421 =37a-b, 460-1 = 39a)
(8) Difference between relatively coarser (*rags pa*) or more subtle (*phra ba*) doctrinal formulation or systematization (*rnam gzhag*) (ThGS 75a).

There also existed several more technical conceptual schemes that had important scholastic applications, such as the threefold scheme of definiens (*mtshon byed*), definiendum (*mtshon bya*), and exemplification of the definiendum (*mtshan gzhi*) (ThGS 63b). But the above should be enough to show the sophisticated tools that scholars in this tradition had at their disposal.

Hierarchy of Importance

Underlying the utilization of these various concepts and procedures lay a number of basic presuppositions, sometimes explicitly discussed and sometimes not. One of the fundamental points was that there was a hierarchy of importance in doctrine, a hierarchy of levels (*skabs*). Higher and lower levels—i.e. different doctrinal or philosophical contexts—should not be confused. Otherwise any discussion will be at cross-purposes. One should also know what are the vital points (*gnad*), and these should not be injured or vitiated even slightly (DS III 460-1 = 39a, cf. III 421 = 37b). Where a distinction between two levels has been made, one should recognize and follow the higher or most important of the two. For example, one should follow the definite meaning, and not rely on provisional meaning (DS I 160-1 = 10a; III 416 = 37a). One must know that certain scriptural statements had a special intent that the words themselves do not make explicit. In such cases, one must try to discern the underlying or deeper intention. Certain sayings to the same effect were well known in the Indo-Tibetan tradition and they derive from canonical authority, as for instance the four "reliances" (*pratisaraṇa*):[258]

(1) Don't rely on the person (*gang zag*), rely on the doctrine (*chos*).
(2) Don't rely on the letter (*tshig*), rely on the spirit (*don).*
(3) Don't rely on the provisional meaning (*drang don*), rely on the definite meaning (*nges don*).
(4) Don't rely on ordinary consciousness (*rnam shes*), rely on Gnosis (*ye shes*).

Similarly, as mentioned above, it was essential to discriminate and specify which sphere of doctrine was being discussed: Was it theory (*lta ba*), or non-concentrative practical conduct (*spyod pa*), or meditative practice (*sgom pa*) (DS III 518ff = 42b)? These were essential distinctions even from the time of the bSam-yas debate, and the official judgment which arose from the debate (as transmitted by the *sBa-bzhed* tradition and the standard Tibetan histories following it, such as those of Bu-ston and dPa'-bo gTsug-lag-phreng-ba) addressed each of these categories separately. According to the judgment, henceforth Tibetans

[258] See E. Lamotte (1988); M. Kapstein (1988), p. 160f; etc.

were to follow: (a) for *theory*, the Madhyamaka tradition of Nāgārjuna,[259] (b) in non-concentrative *conduct*, the six perfections, and (c) in *meditation*, the cultivation of insight into the absolute through the three kinds of discriminative understanding.[260] Such distinctions sometimes allowed a scholar to clarify seeming differences of doctrine as mere confusions of doctrinal category or context. As mentioned above, Shākya-mchog-ldan was one who used them as a legitimate avenue for explaining and justifying the *dkar po chig thub* metaphor in terms acceptable to other doctrinally trained scholars.[261] And indeed, many of the points of apparent difference between later Sa-skya-pa and Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud-pa scholars could be resolved in a similar way.

Such basic distinctions and principles could be learned. Once learned, they should be applied in the appropriate cases (DS I 188 = 11a). But to begin with, one had to base oneself on a solid and wide knowledge of scripture. That way, even if one erred, it would only be a mistake regarding the incidentals and not the essentials (DS III 527-531 = 42a-b). Sa-paṇ spelled out the necessary attainments of a religious scholar when he described in his *sKyes bu dam pa* epistle what sort of scholars or "noble individuals" (*skyes bu dam pa*) he hoped would examine and investigate the differences between what his and others' interpretations of doctrine:[262]

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[259] It is said that the previous ruler Khri lDe-srong-btsan had already issued a decree in favor of Nāgārjuna's Madhyamaka. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 130, n. 250.

[260] The last specification regarding meditation was crucial because the first two types of discriminative understanding (*shes rab: prajñā*) were namely those arisen from learning and reflection. (The third was of course that which arises from meditative realization.)

This account of the judgment is based on the sBa bzhed tradition. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 83f, who points out the similarities between the accounts of Bu-ston (*Chos 'byung* 129b), dPa'-bo (*mKhas pa'i dga' ston* 119a) and Padma-dkar-po (*Chos 'byung* 165a). The Chinese Tun huang materials such as the *Cheng-li chüeh* (f. 129a), however, state that the outcome of the debate was an edict authorizing the Ch'an teachings. See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 83.

[261] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Phyag rgya chen po gsal bar byed pa'i bstan bcos tshangs pa'i 'khor los gzhan blo'i dregs pa nyams byed*, Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 344 (7b).

[262] Sa-paṇ, *sKyes bu dam pa*, p. 333.2.3 (*na* 75a): *'di dag tshig dang don gyi rnam dbye shes pa/ lung dang rigs pa'i gnad la mkhas pa/ pha rol tu phyin pa dang/ gsang sngags kyi don la ma rmongs pa/ gzhung dang gdams ngag gi gnad mi 'gal bar nyams su len pa shes pa/ drang don dang nges don gyis mdo'i cha phyed pa/ dgongs pa dang ldem dgongs kyi gnad ma 'khrul par thugs su chud pa/ sgra ji bzhin pa dang ji bzhin ma yin pa'i tshig 'chad shes pa'i mkhas pa/ don rnam par 'byed par nus pa'i shes rab can/ chags sdang med cing gzu bor gnas pa/ grub mtha' ngan pa'i gdon gyis blo ma bslad pa'i skyes bu dam pa rnams*

Noble individuals who understand how to discriminate the letter and the spirit regarding these [doctrines], who are masters in the essentials of scripture and reasoning, who are not ignorant in the content of the Perfection and Mantra [systems], who know how to practice without contradiction the essential points of the practical instructions and basic treatises, [who understand] the division of parts of Sūtras according to provisional meaning and definite meaning and who understand without error the vital points of intention and hidden intention, i.e. learned scholars who know how to explain literal and non-literal expressions, those possessing discriminative understanding which is capable of analyzing the meaning, dispassionate ones who dwell in unbiased rectitude, whose minds are not possessed by the demon of base philosophical tenets...."

Doctrinal Relativism

Implicit in all this was thus that one must know how and when each principle or distinction should be applied. Each established system of practice could claim to some extent its own validity within its own level or context. The different Buddhist monastic traditions, for instance, were each valid for their adherents (DS I 175-185 = 10b-11a; KhJ III 21, autocommentary). Just because they differed, one could not say one was ultimately right and another one wrong. As long as one had committed oneself to a certain system of practice and discipline, one was bound by its regulations. Moreover in religious teaching, as in gardening, certain methods were appropriate for one situation but completely inappropriate for another (DS I 195-8 = 11b; cf. II 11-13 = 14b-15a; KhJ III 32, autocommentary).

A sort of pragmatism thus existed on the level of practice—the rightness or wrongness of practice depended on its efficaceousness in bringing one to Buddhahood. But on the level of theory, there was never a lapse into relativism. By putting a theory or tenet in a wider context or applying a higher level of analysis to it, one could show it to be unreasonable or unacceptable. Higher views refute the lower, but not vice versa.[263]

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[263] Cf. Śāntideva, BCA IX 3cd-4ab. Cf. also Sa-paṇ's KhJ III 45 and 52.

Thus to say that each doctrine was ultimately "true in its own place" (*rang sa na bden*) was unacceptable (DS III 410 = 36b-37a). As mentioned above, one of the extreme doctrines Sa-paṇ combatted in this regard was a radical doctrinal relativism that maintained for instance that "All vehicles were true in their own context."[264] Go-rams-pa in his *sDom gsum rab dbye* commentary ascribed this doctrine to such people as "Dam-pa Phyung-chung-ba, etc.," evidently referring to the early Zhi-byed master Dam-pa Phyar-chung, the first Tibetan instructed by the Indian siddha Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas (d. 1117).[265] According to 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas introduced him to a special instruction according to which Tantra and Pāramitāyāna did not need to be distinguished.[266]

Sa-paṇ strongly criticized in his *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 133-136 = 24a) doctrines that belonged to neither Pāramitāyāna nor Mantrayāna nor Śrāvaka.[267] He emphasized the need for a doctrine to have an authentic origin within one of the accepted systems of Indian Buddhism, saying:[268]

> Most contemporary Buddhists do not belong to the religious tradition of the Perfections, because they do not practice the three Disciplines. Because they lack initiation and the two stages [of tantric practice], they do not belong to the doctrine of the Vajrayāna. Since they don't know the Vinaya section of the scriptures, they are not a religious tradition of the Śrāvakas, either. Alas, [to] whose doctrine can they [belong]? Even though there may be many sons who have no [acknowledged] fathers, they cannot be included within a patrilineal

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[264] DS III 406: *kha cig theg pa rang sa na// bden pa yin zhes kun la sgrogs//.*

[265] Go-rams-pa, *sDom gsum rab dbye rnam bshad*, p. 190.2.

[266] See G. Roerich, transl, p. 913-4; Tib. text p. 812.1 (*nya* 22b.1): *phyar chung sngags dang pha rol tu phyin pa gnyis med kyi gdams pa la ngo sprod del.*

[267] See also ThGS 48b.

[268] DS III 133-136 (*na* 24a):
da lta'i chos pa phal che ba// bslab pa gsum po mi sbyong bas//
pha rol phyin pa'i chos lugs min// dbang dang rim gnyis mi ldan pas//
rdo rje theg pa'i bstan pa min// 'dul ba'i sde snod mi shes pas//
nyan thos kyi yang chos lugs min// kye ma gang gi bstan pa 'gyur//
pha med pa yi bu mang yang// rigs kyi nang du chud mi nus//
de bzhin khungs nas mi byung ba'i// chos pa bstan pa'i nang du min//
sGam-po-pa, too, clearly acknowledged the need for a genuine origin and a valid lineal transmission for any special instruction. See his works, vol. 1, p. 216.4: *brgyud pa dang mi ldan na gdam ngag khyad par can mi 'byung ba'i skyon yod do//.*

family lineage. Just so, religious practitioners who have not originated from an authentic source are not [to be included] within the [Buddhist] Doctrine.

The Need to Apply Criteria Impartially

Finally, one of the features of Sa-paṇ's procedure was that it was best applied by "dispassionate" (*chags sdang med pa*) people who dwell in "unbiased rectitude" (*gzu bor gnas pa*).[269] The critical principles should in fact be impartially applied—as much to himself as to others. Sa-paṇ invited others to employ the same criteria against himself, if they applied, saying, for instance: "If I possess the fault I criticize others for [here especially: bogus innovations], then let the learned disparage me!" (DS III 515 = 42a). Or as he stated in his *sKyes bu dam pa*:[270]

> If my words are true, then may you noble ones say: "Well done!" But if this is faulty, then refute it through scripture and reasoning!

And still more broadly, in his *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas...*, he invited the displeasure of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, whom he had invoked as his witnesses, if what he was teaching was erroneous:[271]

> If I am teaching falsely, then may you [Buddhas and Bodhisattvas] disapprove of me; but if I am teaching truly, then may you be pleased with me!

But when asked certain delicate questions, sometimes he gave just a general indication of his answer. Then, diplomatically skirting a direct reply, he advised the questioner to conduct his own thorough investigation of the matter—i.e. to apply the appropriate criteria himself.[272]

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[269] Sa-paṇ, *sKyes bu dam pa*, p. 333.2.3 (*na* 75a).

[270] Sa-paṇ, *sKyes bu dam pa* p. 333.3.4 (*na* 75b):
gal te bdag gi tshig bden na// dam pa rnams kyis legs zhes gsungs//
'on te 'di la skyon chags na// lung dang rigs pas sun phyung shig//

[271] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i*, p. 324.3.4 (*na* 57a):
gal te log par smra na ni// khyed rnams kyis kyang bdag la khrel//
'on te bden par smra na ni// khyed kyis bdag la dgyes par mdzod//

[272] Sa-paṇ, *bKa' gdams nam mkha' 'bum*, p. 416.2.1 (*na* 244a): *dri ba bcu gsum pa/ 'bri stag la sogs pa phyag rgya pa'i chos 'di nor ram ma nor zer ba la/ 'bri stag dang phyag rgya*

Sa-paṇ's Outline of Critical Method

Probably the best and most succinct summary of Sa-paṇ's critical "theological" method is given in one of his own brief, versified works, which in the Derge edition bears the title "Why it is Necessary to Expound in Conformity with Correct Scripture and Reasoning" (*Lung rigs rnam dag dang mthun par 'chad dgos tshul*). The work belongs to the period of the author's mature doctrinal writings: it post-dates the *Tshad ma rigs gter* (composed ca. 1219?), and probably his *sDom gsum rab dbye* (composed ca. 1235?), as well. In some lists of his works, it is even referred to as the "basic text" (*rtsa ba*) of the *sDom gsum rab dbye*. Though it seems unlikely that Sa-paṇ himself ever gave it this title, the little work does in a way reveal the critical principles otherwise best exemplified by the *sDom gsum rab dbye* among his major works. Even though the work has already been translated into English, its contents can be clarified still more by presenting them again here in paraphrase and translation.[273]

The introductory first verse of the work summarizes the author's own qualifications for stating the principles which follow: He was a Buddhist monk who had widely studied under learned masters, who possessed an intellect capable of critical discrimination, who kept carefully moral discipline, and who possessed the correct philosophical theory. The next verse (v. 1) clarifies his pessimistic historical view and his personal motivation: Though the Buddha's teaching had once flourished in India and had been effectively introduced into Tibet through the work of the great translators, nowadays it has mostly declined, he states. But (verses 2-3) wishing to make the Doctrine flourish once again, he studied and made himself proficient in the traditional fields of knowledge, the collections of non-Tantric and Tantric scriptures, and the universally recognized systems of established philosophical tenets (of India).

He mentioned (v. 4) that a precedent for his activities could be found among the critical works of past great Buddhist scholars, and that he

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pa'i chos lugs 'di rgyud sde dang sde snod dang mthun mi mthun ci rigs par gda'/ 'di yang dag pa'i lam du 'gyur mi 'gyur khyed rang gis legs par dpyod/.

[273] See J. D. Schoening and P. K. Sørensen (1988), pp. 42-49. For the versification, I follow that study. For references to other previous studies touching on this work, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 50.

considered himself to be following in their footsteps:

> The learned have discriminated erroneous philosophical tenets from those which are not erroneous. Following them, I, too, have investigated a little through scripture and reasoning.

What sort of criticisms had Sa-paṇ himself already made? He mentions here (vs. 5-6) first of all that Tibetan dialecticians of his day for the most part maintained a position similar to that of non-Buddhist Indian dialectics, according to which such things as substance (*dravya*), individuals (*viśeṣa*), attributes (*guṇa*), genus (*sāmanya*) and relations (*sambandha*) were accepted as real entities. He says he has already refuted these theories thoroughly, indirectly referring to his previously composed treatise on Buddhist epistemology and logic (Pramāṇa), the *Tshad ma rigs gter*. Secondly (v. 7), he has heard (or read) many erroneous expositions of the basic scriptures such as the Prajñāpāramitā, Abhidharma, treatises of the Vijñapti(mātra) and Madhyamaka philosophies, as well as the four classes of Tantras in the Mantrayāna system. He has (v. 8) also seen some vow-imparting rituals conducted in ways that did not conform with the Sūtras or Tantras—in the Pratimokṣa system, beginning with the vows of refuge, in the conferring of the Bodhisattva vows through the formal engendering of the Thought of Awakening (*bodhicitta*), and in the conferring of Vajrayāna pledges through tantric initiations. (vs. 9-10:) In the realm of certain yogic practices and insights of the highest Tantras, too, he has seen some explanations which did not agree with the word of the Buddha. Accordingly (v. 11), he critically investigated these through scripture and reasoning, saying regarding the established tenets of those traditions: "These [tenets] are acceptable," and "These [others] are not acceptable."[274]

Then he mentioned (v. 12) the mixed reception that his critical investigations had found in Tibet, and his own advice to others in the face of those partly negative reactions:

> Concerning that, some have said "Excellent!" Some others have said, "That is unacceptable!" Even so, those endowed with discriminative understanding should investigate it well. If it is acceptable by way of reasoning, then accept it! If it is not so, then you should reject it.

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[274] The doctrinal criticisms he referred to here were no doubt chiefly those he had made in his *sDom gsum rab dbye*, which he structured as a discussion of the three systems of vows.

What criteria were to be applied when accepting something through reasoning and scripture? He explained (vs. 13-14):

> Acceptance, too, should be done through scripture and reasoning. With scripture, furthermore, take the definitive meaning as the decisive criterion. Don't rely on provisional meaning! With reasoning, moreover, you should uphold objectively grounded reasoning. Fallacious reasoning is pointless. To accept and reject after examining the intention is the way of the learned. To hold as chief the teachings of the non-Buddhist Indian sectarians and the tradition of the "old [Tibetans]"[275] is the conduct of the ignorant.

Through this method, noble individuals could maintain the Noble Dharma as the highest of religious traditions, he added (v. 15). And if one did so, the Noble Dharma itself would reach its highest intention.

On that thought, he ended the main body of his versified summary of method. But he was still not quite finished. The prose colophon that remained gave him one more opportunity to make several important points. For instance, he took pains explicitly to reject a biased approach, both for himself and others, urging instead the principled application of this method as a widely applicable and individually verifiable procedure:

> Therefore, in conformity with the teaching of the noble gurus and following scripture and reasoning, I have expounded the stainless Sūtras and Tantras of the Lord Buddha—this tradition being established through scripture and reasoning, taught by the learned, accomplished by the adepts, and being something to be passed through by the Saints. [And in so expounding them,] I have said: "This way is acceptable." But I have not expounded that through a biased mind. Therefore I respectfully request everyone to examine with an honest, open mind whether what I have expounded here accords with scripture and reasoning or does not.

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[275] Sa-paṇ refers with the term "old [Tibetans]" (*rgan po*) to his Tibetan Buddhist predecessors in general, and not just to such earlier dialecticians as Phywa-pa. As mentioned above, he uses the similar term *bod bgres po* in his *Nga brgyad ma'i 'grel pa* p. 151.2.3 (*tha* 305a) to refer to traditions he seems to have considered as specifically Tibetan, and there he mentions: the Great Seal, Great Perfection and the bKa'-gdams-pa (Tibetan followers of Atiśa's tradition). In his *Tshad ma rigs gter rang 'grel*, Sa-paṇ refers generally to the Tibetans as *bod rnams, bod phal cher*, and *bod 'ga' zhig*. In one passage of the work, however, he contrasts *bod snga rabs pa* with the *bod kyi rtog ge pa phyi rabs pa*.

Thus he also used this opportunity to sum up his conception of what constitutes the body of the Buddha's genuine teachings—namely, those doctrines of the genuine Sūtras and Tantras that agree with scripture and reasoning, that have been expounded by the recognized great scholars, that have been meditatively cultivated by the Tantric adepts, and that constitute the very spiritual path traversed by the saints on their way to Awakening. He denied that his own critical conclusions about what is acceptable doctrine (i.e. genuine, effective Buddhist tradition) had been reached through partisanship, and he invited others to apply the same criteria to his conclusions, and thus to test those conclusions for themselves. Implicit in this is that he saw himself as appealing to a more objective and more widely applicable standard of truth. His own conclusions, he believed, could be verified by other honest and disinterested parties.

His Reaction to the Reception of his Criticisms

Just as was to be expected, the upholders of the traditions that Sa-paṇ questioned did not receive these criticisms with much enthusiasm. In fact, some adherents of those other traditions attributed his remarks to base personal motives, including hatred and bigotry. The fact that he felt his aims and principles to have been widely misrepresented or misunderstood prompted Sa-paṇ later to write a further work in his own defence and justification, his *Epistle to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the Ten Directions* (*Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas...*). By turns impassioned, critical and discouraged, Sa-paṇ reveals in this work rare glimpses of his personality, and his epistle is a masterpiece of Tibetan religious literature. The following passage shows Sa-paṇ's frustration at the no-win situation he felt himself to be in:

> Most worldly people praise living beings who refute the Noble Doctrine. Because I have refuted non-religion, most worldly people speak ill me. Most worldly people do not [appreciate or] follow after the Buddha [who is] kind toward the world. These worldly people

follow [Kāma,] the deceiver who has flowers for arrows. Alas, people of inferior merit propitiate demons because they have lost their divine heritage![276]

Thus, while I have made refutations and proofs in conformity with scripture and reasoning while investigating what is erroneous and non-erroneous in meaning and wording, most worldly people speak ill of me through thoughts of desire and aversion. But You [Buddhas and Bodhisattvas], who possess the eye of omniscience, are pleased. Just what the Master Nāgārjuna said has come to pass, namely: "The teaching was not taught by the Tathāgatas for the sake of disputation, but it burns the theories of others like fire burns firewood."[277]

I, too, have not taught with the thought of disparaging others. And yet, by teaching in accord with Your scriptural divisions, this has burned the religious traditions of others. When one lays down a plumb line straight, it annoys those having crooked shapes. In the same way, by [my] establishing Your teachings [correctly], those [followers of] counterfeit doctrines are not pleased. I am without desire and aversion, but if, wishing to preserve the doctrine, I speak truthfully, then the person I address becomes furious. If I speak a falsehood, it is a great evil.[278]

Now, [reverently] folding my hands, I implore the Buddhas in [all] ten directions: Am I to speak the truth, or should I speak falsely? If

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[276] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas*, pp. 327.1-2 (*na* 62a-b):
'gro ba dam chos sun 'byin pa// de la 'jig rten phal cher bstod//
bdag gis chos min sun phyung bas// 'jig rten phal cher bdag la smod//
sangs rgyas 'jig rten thugs brtse la// 'jig rten phal cher rjes mi 'jug//
slu byed me tog mda' can gyi// rjes su 'jig rten 'di dag 'brang//
kye ma bsod nams dman pa'i mi// lha skal chad pas 'byung po sgrub//

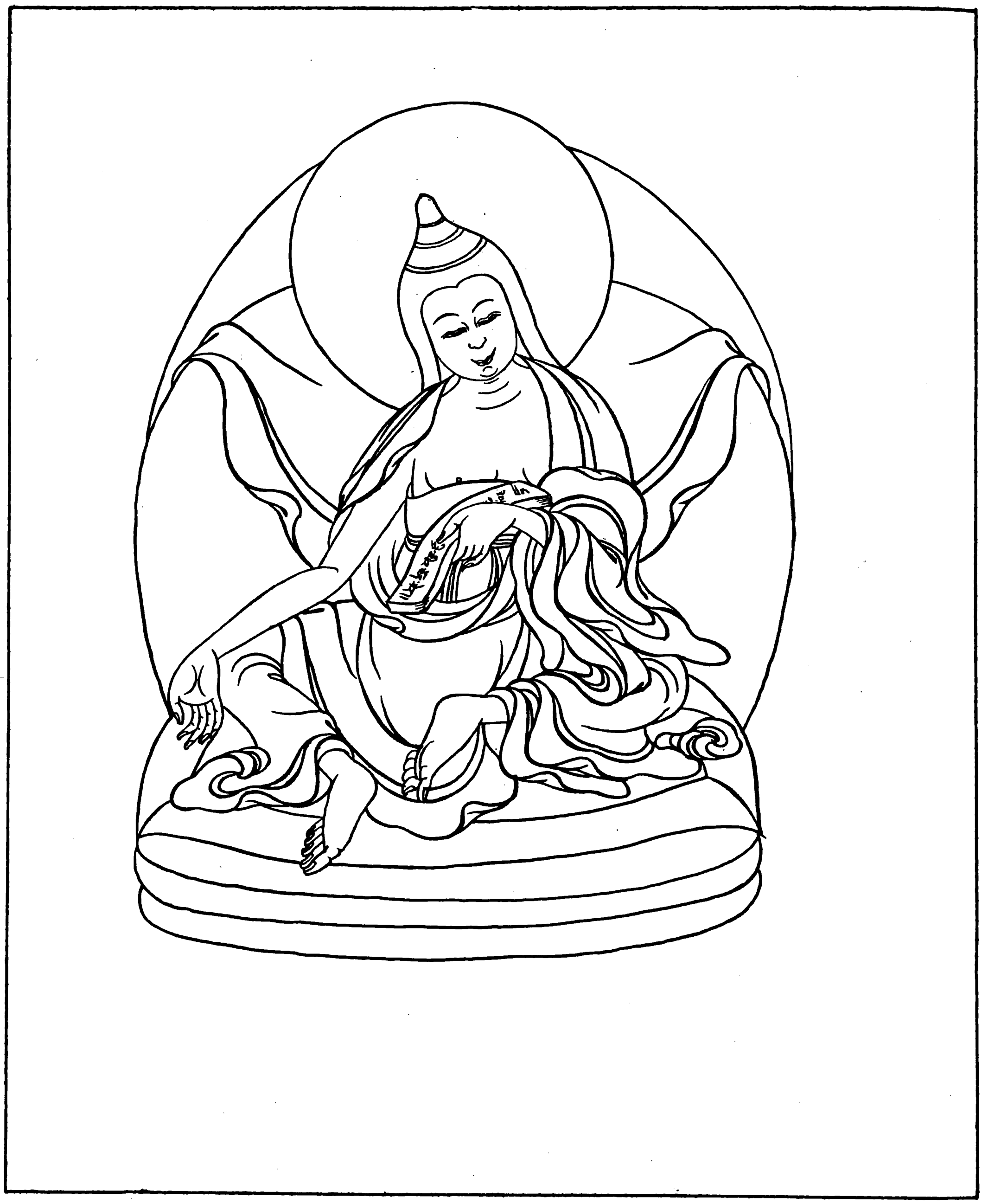
[277] *Ibid.*: *de ltar don dang tshig dag gis// 'khrul dang ma 'khrul dpyad pa la//*
lung dang rigs pa mi 'gal bar// bdag gis dgag sgrub bgyis pa las//
'jig rten phal cher chags sdang gi// bsams pas bdag la smod mod kyi//
thams cad gzigs pa'i spyan mnga' ba// khyed ni bdag la dgyes par bsams//
'phags pa klu sgrub 'di skad du// chos 'di de bzhin gshegs rnams kyis//
rtsod pa'i don du ma gsungs mod// 'on kyang 'dis ni gzhan lta rnams//
me yi bud shing bzhin du bsregs// zhes gsungs pa de thog tu bab//

[278] *Ibid.*: *bdag kyang gzhan la khyad gsod pa'i// bsams pas bshad pa ma lags mod//*
'on kyang khyed kyi sde snod bzhin// bshad pas gzhan gyi chos lugs bsregs//
thig rkud drang por bzhag pa na// ya yo can rnams sems la gzan//
de bzhin khyed kyi gsungs sgrubs pas// chos ltar bcos rnams mnyes ma gyur//
bdag la chags sdang ma mchis mod// 'on kyang bstan pa bsrung 'dod pas//
bden par smras na pha rol khro// brdzun par smras na sdig pa lci//

I speak truly, all those who speak falsely are angered. But if I speak falsely, I fear that it contradicts Your word. Moreover, if I protect the Doctrine, this refutes all erroneous doctrines. But if I preserve the feelings of worldly people, this promotes erroneous doctrines. If I speak truly, it offends the feelings of others. If I speak falsely, it destroys the Doctrine. If I abstain from speaking, the matter will not be understood. Therefore the noble conduct is difficult![279]

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[279] *Ibid.: da ni phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas la// thal sbyar nas ni don 'di zhu//*
bdag gis bden par smra lags sam// 'on te brdzun par smra bar bgyi//
gal te bden par smras [=smra?] *na ni// brdzun par smra ba thams cad khro//*
de ste [?] *brdzun par smras* [=smra?] *na ni// khyed kyi gsung dang 'gal du dogs//*
gzhan yang bstan pa bsrung na ni// chos log thams cad sun 'byung 'tshal//
'on te 'jig rten sems bsrung na// chos log la yang bstod 'tshal lo//
bden par smras na gzhan sems bsregs// brdzun par smras na bstan pa 'jig//
smra ba spangs na don mi rtogs// des na dam pa'i spyod pa dka'//.



3. Shāntipa (Ratnākaraśānti)

6

LATER COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION

Some useful additional help for understanding the historical and doctrinal points discussed by Sa-paṇ is given by later Sa-skya-pa commentators, among whom the learned royal monk of Mustang, Glo-bo mkhan-chen bSod-nams-lhun-grub (1456-1532), occupies a prominent position. The latter was one of the greatest commentators on Sa-paṇ's writings.[280] He gave some very pertinent explanations for instance in his *'Khrul spong dgongs rgyan*, a treatise in which he tried to develop further the replies Go-rams-pa bSod-nams-seng-ge (1429-1489) had given to the controversial questions raised by Shākya-mchog-ldan about certain passages in the *sDom gsum rab dbye*.[281] To lend additional support to Go-rams-pa's answers, and to show that Go-rams-pa had adhered to well-established tradition in making his remarks, Glo-bo mkhan-chen gathered and quoted a number of lengthy quotations from relevant works. In the present instance, he cited in fact teachings given by his own main teacher, rGyal-tshab Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug (1424-1478), the highly accomplished nephew of Ngor-chen Kun-dga'-bzang-po (1382-1456). Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug had served as 4th abbot of Ngor from 1465-1478, and his authority extended to both camps for he had been a Vajrayāna master not only of Go-rams-pa (who served after him as Ngor abbot, 1483-86) but also of Shākya-mchog-ldan.

The source cited and quoted by Glo-bo mkhan-chen was not something actually preserved among Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug's writings; rather, it was a record of his explanation set down in writing by one of the latter's disciples, a certain lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa bSod-nams-dpal, who had questioned Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug and did not want to forget the answer

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[280] On his commentarial writings, see D. Jackson (1987), pp. 212ff and 221, n. 20.

[281] For more on these works, see D. Jackson (1991), pp. 234-37.

he gave. Glo-bo mkhan-chen cited this reply at length, stating that it supplied the answer for instance to the following doubt raised by Shākya-mchog-ldan about a verse in the third, i.e. Tantric-Vow, chapter of the *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 505 = 41a):

> I ask what was the intended meaning of the basic text [that is, of Sa-skya Paṇḍita's *sDom gsum rab dbye*] about whether or not the Six Dharmas [of Nāropa] existed in the lineage down to Lord Mi-la [ras-pa, 1040-1123]. If it did exist, then since this is maintained to be Nāropa's lineage, what is the contradiction? If it did not, then what were the three ways in which [Sa-paṇ] received the three traditions of the Six Dharmas?

Glo-bo mkhan-chen begins his reply:[282]

> It is widely said that there occurred some investigations regarding this point even from the very first, and nowadays, too, one can see many who have their doubts. But only the present words of the noble reverend Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug, written down by the same master's direct disciple lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa [bSod-nams-dpal], is certain to be the continuous teaching transmission [from Sa-paṇ], and it definitely serves to answer these questions. It states as follows:
>
>> The mTshur-bu Gu-shri[283] had said to [lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa]: "Detailed knowledge about Śākyamuni is possessed by Ānanda. Detailed knowledge about Virūpa is possessed by you Sa-skya-pas. Detailed knowledge about Nāropa and Mar-pa [1012-1097] is possessed by us, the Dwags-po bka'-brgyud-pa. Therefore whether or not there existed the Six Dharmas after Mi-la and whether Mar-pa had an initiation-rite for Vajravārāhī is known by us, but not by you! ...."[284]
>>
>> [lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa] respectfully reported this to the lord master Vajradhara [Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug], who replied:

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[282] Glo-bo mkhan-chen, *sDom pa gsum*, pp. 310ff (51b-).

[283] Probably he was Go-shrī dPal-'byor-don-grub (ca. 1427-ca. 1489), who served as regent of mTshur-phu at the death of Karma-pa mThong-ba-don-ldan in 1452-3. A brief sketch of his life is given in Si-tu and Be-lo, vol. 1, pp. 525-6 (*da* 263b-264a). He is counted as the first rGyal-tshab sprul-sku.

[284] A section discussing the *phag mo'i byin brlabs* controversy has been omitted here for the sake of brevity.

"Generally speaking, [Sa-paṇ] in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* and *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal* has refuted what most of these incorrect Great Meditators have done: namely, squandering their own profound religious tradition of Nāropa, and haphazardly following as their own practice the religious teachings of other [traditions] such as the Great Perfection, and then, without receiving the maturing tantric empowerment of their own tradition, granting the Great Seal instructions and practicing it wrongly. But how could [Sa-paṇ] have refuted the essence of the Great Seal taught by the accomplished masters such as Nāropa and Maitrīpāda?

"Also, generally speaking, Mar-pa possessed a complete and unerring collection of religious instructions of the four Tantric classes, including those of the Father Tantra Guhyasamāja. The Great Meditators have probably not known the matter exactly. The Lord Nārotapāda possessed two religious traditions: (I) the religious tradition of long lineage, the intact instructions, and (II) the religious teaching of the essence, the profound sense.[285] To my knowledge, the first are all these religious instructions of the three [Cakrasamvara traditions]—Lūhipāda, Kṛṣṇapāda and Ghaṇṭāpāda—which came down through the paṇḍitas such as the Pham-mthing-pa brothers [of Nepal]. To my knowledge, the second are all these religious teachings given by Vajradhara to Tilopa, by him to Nāropa, and by him to Mar-pa lo-tsā-ba.

To my knowledge, this teaching called "the Profound Sense, the Six Dharmas of Nāropa," is a way of practicing through practical instructions a summation of the entire sense of the Cakrasamvara Basic Tantra by way of six points, which are namely: (1) the dharma of empowerment, which ripens, (2) the dharma of the path of means, which liberates, (3) the dharma of the gnosis of the Great Seal, which is realization, (4) the dharma of the pledges and vows, which is an assistant, (5) the dharma of the great stimulation of benefits, which is the conduct, and (6) the dharma of the Fruit, which is spiritual accomplishment.

Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug goes on to describe these six teachings one by one, enumerating, for instance, the practices belonging to the Path of Means.

[285] Cf. 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Works, vol. 2, p. 263.3: *nā ro chen po'i brgyud pa 'di// tshig don gnyis la skyon med grags// tshig gi brgyud pa mang na yang// don brgyud mos gus can gyis shes// thugs nas thugs su brgyud pa yi//....*

These consist of the practice of the Stage of Generation, in full or abbreviated form, and the instructions of the Stage of Completion, being six instructions including the three basic teachings: Inner Heat, Clear Light and Phantom Body, and the three branch teachings: Dream, Thought-transference at death, and the Intermediate Stage.[286] He continues:[287]

> The reason that it is so is this: Mar-pa gave to Mes-ston[288] the full set of teachings of the four classes of Mother Tantras. The latter bestowed it on 'Khon sGyi-chu-ba dKon-mchog-'bar. He gave it to Sa-chen [Kun-dga'-snying-po 1092-1158]. And it came down to the Dharma master Sa-paṇ through an intact lineage. The great cotton-clad yogi Mi-la in the company of rNgog-ston Chos-sku-rdo-rje received from Lord Mar-pa the empowerment based on the Basic Tantra of Cakrasamvara, the exposition [of the Tantra], as well as the practical precepts of the Six Dharmas of the Profound Sense. After receiving this, he practiced it as something transmitted only a single generation. And when such disciples as Ras-chung rDo-rje-grags-pa [1083-1161] and Dwags-po lha-rje [sGam-po-pa] requested the Profound Sense, the Six Dharmas of Nāropa, he did not confer the Tantric empowerment in the way he had received it from Mar-pa, but instead had them receive the empowerments from others. And then, bestowing [on them] each of the six dharmas of the Completion Stage and giving an instruction in the theory [of the ultimate], he made this the tradition of giving the full instructions. Therefore, even though Mi-la had received from Mar-pa those six instructions of the dharma of empowerment, which matures, and the rest, according to their own tradition, Dwags-po lha-rje and the others had not received them. With this in mind, [Sa-paṇ] said (DS III 505 = 41a):
>
> > Down to Mi-la, there was nothing besides that instruction called "The Six Dharmas of Nāropa."

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286 See also H. Guenther (1971), p. xv, n. 1.

287 Glo-bo mkhan-chen, *sDom pa gsum*, p. 313.5 (53a-b).

288 This was Mes-tshon-pa bSod-nams-rgyal-mtshan, who founded the most important exposition lineages passing from Mar-pa. See G. Roerich transl. p. 405; 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, *nya* 3b.

After concluding the second part of this record of Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug's teachings (which addressed a related controversy), Glo-bo mkhan-chen quoted still another such text attributed to Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug as set down in writing by the same lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa, this one explaining how Sa-paṇ himself could assert in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 655 =48a) that he had received three traditions of the Six Dharmas when he himself had also stated that the Six Dharmas had not been transmitted after Mi-la:[289]

> On another occasion [lDan-ma bka'-bcu-pa] asked: "Did Mar-pa lo-tsā-ba bestow the Profound Path Six Dharmas of Nāropa upon all four of his own great disciples? Since the Dharma Master [Sa-paṇ] taught that after Mi-la there was no Six Dharmas of Nāropa, doesn't this contradict the statement [in the *sDom gsum rab dbye*] that he himself had received "the three traditions of the Six Dharmas of Nāropa"?
>
> Kun-dga'-dbang-phyug answered: "To my knowledge, Mar-pa, while expounding the Basic Tantra of Cakrasamvara, bestowed on all four the complete content of the Profound Sense, the Six Dharmas of Nāropa. But as for instructions given according to the basic works of separate practical precepts such as the "Vajra Song of the Six Dharmas," these [Mar-pa] only gave to Mi-la. For example, it is like instruction in the separately existing practical precepts of the Five Stages (*rim lnga*) and Six Applications (*sbyor drug*) [which is given] even though the full sense of the Five Stages and Six Applications is present when explaining the Tantras of Guhyasamāja and Kālacakra. [Sa-paṇ's] statement [DS III 505 =41a-b] that after Mi-la the Six Dharmas did not exist had in mind that the complete set of the Profound Sense Six Dharmas, comprised of the maturing Dharma of empowerment and the rest, did not exist [any more]. His statement [DS III 656 =48a] that he had received three traditions of the Six Dharmas had in mind his having received the Six Dharmas of the Stage of Completion, comprised of Inner Heat and the rest.

The firmly Tantra-based Sa-skya-pa tradition (which based itself on a large corpus of gSar-ma-pa Tantric exegesis and precepts) considered it to be of the highest importance to give such secret instructions as the Path of Means and the Great Seal only in their original fully Tantric context in which Nāropa and his lineage down to Mar-pa had formulated and

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289 Glo-bo mkhan-chen, *sDom pa gsum*, pp. 317.3f (55a-b).

transmitted them. In Sa-paṇ's view, the disciples of the great anchorite Mi-la had dispensed with some of the necessary points of ritual and instruction, and in this way Nāropa's full tradition had suffered.[290] (Mi-la according to this account had not given the consecrations himself, but had let his disciples receive them from others, as was also quite legitimate.) Later followers of the Sa-skya-pa order, such as Glo-bo mkhan-chen, continued to stress as essential the transmission of Tantric empowerments together with the other practical precepts and instructions.

Comments by Shākya-mchog-ldan

Another key 15th-century authority for understanding why Sa-paṇ criticized the *dkar po chig thub* and related traditions of the Dwags-po bKa'-brgyud was the scholar and commentator Shākya-mchog-ldan (1428-1507), author of the above-mentioned hundred-odd questions regarding Sa-paṇ's *sDom gsum rab dbye*. Shākya-mchog-ldan was well versed in both Sa-skya-pa and bKa'-brgyud-pa traditions, and seems to have attempted in places to harmonize the seemingly disparate doctrines of Sa-paṇ and sGam-po-pa.[291] Regarding the present discussion, he attempted to give his own explanations of the same controversial statements in Sa-paṇ's *sDom gsum rab dbye* (III 505-6 = 41a-b) that he had earlier called into question:[292]

> Down to Mi-la, there was no [Great Seal instruction in the lineage] beside that instruction called the "Six Yogas of Nāropa." After discarding the Six Yogas and while cultivating the instructions of others such as the "Path with its Fruit" (*Lam 'bras*) and the Great Seal, they maintain that those are Nāropa's lineage. Needless to say this

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[290] See also M. Broido (1985), p. 35f, who contrasted the method of another of Mi-la's students, Ras-chung rDo-rje-grags, with that of sGam-po-pa. The former had more strictly maintained the Mantrayāna and "Path of Methods" context of these instructions.

[291] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 108.

[292] Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye*, chapter III, verses 506-507:
nā ro chos drug zhes bya'i 'khrid// mid la yan chad de las med//
chos drug bor nas lam 'bras dang// phyag rgya chen po la sogs pa//
gzhan gyi gdams ngag bsgom bzhin du// nā ro'i brgyud pa 'dod byed pa//
gzhan dang 'gal ba blta cis smos// rang lugs kyang dang 'gal ba yin//

contradicts [the tradition of] others. It contradicts even their own tradition!

When trying to explain these lines, Shākya-mchog-ldan proceeded with great caution and deliberate exactness: like a tightrope walker, his every step was precise, and every movement calculated to avoid tipping too far toward either side.[293] He was in a delicate position because of his close links on the one hand with the Sa-skya-pas (his main teacher had been a student of Rong-ston, 1367-1449) and on the other hand with the Rin-spungs-pas (then the rulers of Tibet), and hence with their close associate the Zhwa-dmar Karma-pa Chos-grags-ye-shes (1453-1524). He also enjoyed warm personal relations with the Zhwa-nag Karma-pa himself, Chos-grags-rgya-mtsho (1454-1506). Nevertheless, in his role as commentator on this work, Shākya-mchog-ldan seems to have agreed with Sa-paṇ to a considerable extent when explaining some of the above-mentioned controversial passages in the *sDom gsum rab dbye*, saying for instance that little can be seen to distinguish the theory (*lta ba*) of the master Mo-ho-yen as better or worse than that of the (Great Seal) exponents of "this bKa'-brgyud," though he stressed the superiority of the non-meditative practice (*spyod pa*) of the latter, and warned that it should not be falsely criticized.[294] He specified carefully which particular unacceptable doctrinal statements of the early bKa'-brgyud-pas he believed Sa-paṇ had in mind when he criticized the "present-day Great Seal" as a "Chinese tradition of the Great Perfection," and then asserted:[295]

> Concerning how those matters are unacceptable, [Sa-paṇ] composed the basic works that identify the modern-day Great Seal and the Chinese-tradition Great Perfection as one and refute them.

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[293] In the relevant section of his *Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma*, Collected Works, vol. 7, p. 85, Shākya-mchog-ldan incidentally displays a good familiarity with bKa'-brgyud-pa doctrines such as the *dGongs gcig*, quoting the latter twice (pp. 84.2 and 85.1) in connection with sGam-po-pa's views on the *chen po gsum gyis ma reg pa* and *dkar po chig thub*.

[294] See Shākya-mchog-ldan, *ibid.*, p. 85.3: *bka' brgyud 'di pa/ rgya nag mkhan po dang lta ba la bzang ngan mi snang yang/*. Cf. S. Karmay (1988), p. 199.

[295] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *ibid.*, p. 84.7-85.1: *don de dag mi 'thad pa'i dbang du mdzad nas/ deng sang gi phyag rgya chen po dang/ rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen gnyis don gcig tu mdzad nas 'gog par mdzad pa'i gzhung rnams gsungs pa yin no//*.

He goes on to quote the *sDom gsum rab dbye* passage (III 347 = 34a), "Some say one needs merit dedication after cultivating the Self-sufficient White [Remedy]...," specifying that these remarks were directed against upholders of sGam-po-pa's tradition, and that therefore here the main things criticized were the failure to identify the real Great Seal and the terming of such a wrongly conceived "Great Seal" as a "Self-sufficient White [Remedy]." But according to Shākya-mchog-ldan, Sa-paṇ was not (here at least) demonstrating that contemporary meditators of the Great Seal were practicing the religious tradition of the Chinese master Mo-ho-yen.[296]

Still later in the same work, Shākya-mchog-ldan explains Sa-paṇ's position in these words:[297]

> So you ask what is [the meaning]? [It is this:] Among the followers of Nāropa's tradition down to Mi-la there was no mastering of such teachings as the *Lam 'bras* or the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] (*dkar po chig thub*) called "Great Seal," which is different from that Six Yogas of Nāropa. But the Lord Dags-po lha-rje [sGam-po-pa], having discarded the emphatic cultivation of solely the Six Yogas within his own tradition, took as his meditative cultivation the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] which was termed "Great Seal." And Phag-mo-gru-pa, having apparently achieved realization through mastering the *Lam 'bras*, and while cultivating instructions other than those from Nāropa, concealed that other lineage and maintained that he upheld the lineage of Nāropa alone. Doing this contradicts both their own and other traditions. This is what [Sa-paṇ] stated in composing the [*sDom gsum rab dbye*] treatise ....

[296] *Ibid.*, p. 85.5.

[297] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *ibid.*, p. 192: *'o na ci zhe na/ mid la yan chad du ni/ nā ro pa'i* [b]*rgyud 'dzin dag la nā ro'i chos drug de las gzhan/ lam 'bras dang/ phyag chen gyi ming can dkar po chig thub sogs la goms par byed pa med la/ rje dags po lha rjes/ chos drug kho na rang* [b]*rgyud la nan tan du goms par byed pa bor nas/ phyag rgya chen po'i ming 'dogs can gyi dkar po gcig thub la sgom du byas pa dang/ phag mo gru pas lam 'bras goms pas grub pa brnyes pa lta bu/ nā ro ta pa las gzhan gyi gdam ngag sgom bzhin du/ brgyud pa gzhan de dag gsang nas/ rje nā ro pa kho na'i* [b]*rgyud 'dzin du 'dod pa ni rang gzhan gyi lugs gnyis dang 'gal/ zhes bstan bcos mdzad pa ....*

And once again in the next section he presents Sa-paṇ's position as being precisely:[298]

> [Question:] So what is [the intended sense]? [Answer:] It means: "If one invokes the lineage of Nāropa while cultivating that Chinese-tradition Great Perfection which had been given the name 'Great Seal,' it contradicts both traditions." As it is said in this very same work: "The present-day Great Seal is for the most part a Chinese religious tradition."

Shākya-mchog-ldan no doubt had good reasons for indicating sGam-po-pa as the one who introduced the Great Perfection-like "*dkar po chig thub*" (with its non-Tantric *sems kyi ngo 'phrod*) into the bKa'-brgyud-pa Great Seal stemming from Nāropa. And as a doctrinal innovation within Mar-pa and Mi-la's tradition, it could be termed a "present-day Great Seal" (*da lta'i phyag rgya chen po*), Sa-paṇ maintained. But Shākya-mchog-ldan's own attitude toward these criticisms by Sa-paṇ, while not overt rejection, is hardly that of zealous, uncritical acceptance either. He lives up here to his obligation as a commentator to penetrate and accurately represent the original author's intention, yet he is somewhat constrained in his agreement, and elsewhere when no longer a commentator and when writing a treatise specifically in defence of the Great Seal and as a follower of the latter tradition, he does of course express contrary opinions or tries to clarify misunderstandings and bring into harmony ostensible disagreements. For instance, in one of his treatises in justification of the Great Seal in the Dwags-po tradition, he referred to the Hwa-shang comparison in these words:[299]

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[298] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *ibid.*, p. 194.6: *'o na ci zhe na/ rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen la phyag rgya chen por ming btags pa de sgom bzhin du/ nā ro'i brgyud pa 'ded na lugs gnyis dang 'gal zhes pa'i don te/ ji skad du/ gzhung 'di nyid las/ da lta'i phyag rgya chen po ni// phal cher rgya nag chos lugs yin//....*

[299] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *ibid.*, p. 344.2:
lta ba yas babs hwa shang gi// bsgom dang mtshungs zhes gsungs mod kyang//
sngags lugs phal cher lta ba nas// brtsams te lam la 'jug par bshad//
In his *Phyag rgya chen po'i shan 'byed* [the first of two identically titled works], Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 365, Shākya-mchog-ldan summarizes very clearly the opposing lines of argument of Sa-paṇ, which had been introduced and discussed from another viewpoint on pp. 355-6. Also in his *gSer gyi thur ma las brtsams pa'i dogs gcod kyi 'bel gtam rab gsal rnam nges sam/ nges don rab gsal*, Collected Works, vol. 17, pp. 529.5 and 541.5, he discusses the references to the "Chinese-tradition Great Perfection" (*rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen*) within a larger exposition of the mentions of the rNying-ma-pa in the *sDom gsum rab dbye*, and he clarifies his own quoting of 'Bri-gung dPal-'dzin's criticisms in the *gSer gyi*

> Although [Sa-paṇ] has said that the theory descending from above is the same as the meditation of the Hwa-shang, in most of the Mantra tradition it is explained that one should enter the path after beginning with theory.

A little bit later he explains and justifies the *dkar po chig thub* notion:[300]

> The "self-sufficient white [remedy]" refers exclusively to theory, but it is not an expression denigrating the preparatory accumulations of merit. Moreover, it means precisely that the Great Seal by itself alone is sufficient, there being no necessity to exert oneself in applying separate remedies to the individual afflictions (*kleśa*) and thought-constructions.

In both his direct comments and his independent treatises, Shākya-mchog-ldan thus makes much of the distinction between "theoretical" (*lta ba*) scriptural statements and those relating to non-concentrative "practice" or "conduct" (*spyod pa*), a distinction that Sa-paṇ himself stressed in his *sDom gsum rab dbye*.[301]

In some other treatises and replies to the great Karma bKa'-brgyud-pa masters and their Rin-spungs-pa patrons, Shākya-mchog-ldan's defenses of this tradition are even more ambitious and elaborate. There the teachings of sGam-po-pa, which started with some revolutionary reordering and synthesizing, seem to have forced upon Shākya-mchog-ldan the necessity for further synthesizing and harmonizing, which he attempts

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thur ma.

[300] Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Phyag rgya chen po gsal bar byed pa'i bstan bcos tshangs pa'i 'khor los gzhan blo'i dregs pa nyams byed*, Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 344 (7b):
dkar po chig thub zhes bya ba// lta ba rkyang pa'i ldog cha nas//
yin gyi bsod nams tshogs dag la// skur ba 'debs pa'i tshig ma yin//
de yang nyon mongs rnam par rtog// so so'i gnyen po tha dad la//
'bad mi dgos par phyag rgya che// gcig pus chog pa'i don nyid do//

[301] Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye*, III, verses 517-519 distinguishes scriptures relating to "theory" (*lta ba*) from those of "practice" (*spyod pa*) and "meditation" (*bsgom pa*):
dper na phyag dang mchod pa dang// sbyin dang tshul khrims sogs mi dgos//
sems bskyed dbang bskur bya mi dgos// bsam gtan klog pa 'dir mi dgos//
dge dang sdig pa gnyis ka med// sangs rgyas sems can yod min sogs//
'di 'dra gsungs pa'i lung rnams kun// lta ba yin gyi bsgom pa dang//
spyod pa gnyis kyi lung ma yin//

sometimes in light of yet another theoretical system, that of the "Emptiness of Other" (*gzhan stong*) Madhyamaka.[302]

The Reception of Sa-paṇ's Ideas among Later dGe-lugs-pa Scholars

Sa-paṇ's interpretations of the doctrinal and historical points in question were received in various but generally positive ways by later followers of Tsong-kha-pa. Some highly influential clerics, whose opinions are accepted as more or less definitive in their respective colleges and whose influence thus continues strongly down to the present, accepted Sa-paṇ's ideas as basically correct.[303] 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa Ngag-dbang-brtson-'grus (1648-1721), for example, exhibits in his monumental *Grub mtha' chen mo* a very close agreement with Sa-paṇ. In the course of his rejection of certain rDzogs-chen and Phyag-chen doctrines as a spurious Madhyamaka, 'Jam-dbyangs-bzhad-pa quotes the *sDom gsum rab dbye* at least twice.[304] He also refers (27a.5) to the "Replies to the Karma-pa [Mi-bskyod-rdo-rje]" (*Kar lan*) composed by both Se-ra rje-btsun Chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1469-1546) and Paṇ-chen bSod-nams-grags-pa (1478-1554).

Similarly, Sum-pa mkhan-po Ye-shes-dpal-'byor (1704-1776), the elder contemporary and senior of Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma at the A-mdo monastery of dGon-lung, openly espoused in his famous history of Buddhism the criticisms found in Sa-paṇ's *sDom gsum rab dbye*, quoting the latter work at length. He also repeated the identifications that it was Zhang Tshal-pa who was being criticized, for instance in connection with the *dkar po chig thub*.[305]

The comments of lCang-skya II Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje (1717-1786) in this context were, by contrast, considerably more qualified and circumspect.

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[302] See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 105-8.

[303] Cf. S. Karmay (1988), p. 199.

[304] *Ibid.*, ff. 648.6 (18b): *'jam mgon sa skya paṇḍi ta'i sdom gsum las/ da lta'i phyag rgya chen po dang// rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen la//... don la mam par dbye ba med//.* See also p. 658.2 (23b): *blun po phyag rgya che bsgom pa//....*

[305] See S. C. Das ed. (1908), *dPag bsam ljon bzang*, pp. 403ff.

As the latter wrote in his well-known treatise on philosophical schools:[306]

> The term 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy]' (*dkar po chig thub*) had no wide dissemination before Zhang Tshal-pa; Zhang Tshal-pa even wrote a treatise which treated the 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy]' as its main subject. It appears that this was also the main object refuted by Mañjunātha Sa-skya Paṇḍita.
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> Many later [scholars belonging to] our own and other [traditions] also seem to have made many refutations of this thesis. If the thesis asserted by Zhang Tshal-pa himself consists in the thesis of 'no mentation whatsoever,' then those refutations are right on target; but I do not wish to elaborate on it [here] in detail.

Thus the lCang-skya sprul-sku mentioned Sa-paṇ as a main doctrinal opponent of Zhang. But he was not that clear himself about what actually had been at issue. For him, the really telling later criticisms in this connection had rejected the "non-mentation" (*amanasikāra*) doctrine. But he was not completely sure whether or not this was what Zhang had actually been maintaining by his 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy]' doctrine.

lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje's comments seem to have served as the point of departure for the further remarks of his younger contemporary Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma (1737-1802). The latter was in fact one of the few dGe-lugs-pa scholars who directly disagreed with Sa-paṇ on these points, and when touching on these topics in the bKa-brgyud-pa chapter of his survey of Buddhist philosophical and religious systems, he indeed tried to be even-handed and conciliatory toward the bKa'-brgyud-pas.[307] As briefly alluded to above, Thu'u-bkwan portrayed Sa-paṇ's criticisms as having been directed against "non-mentation" (as might easily be read into lCang-skya's account). He therefore rejected them as unsatisfactory, saying: "Because this [bKa'-brgyud-pa teaching] is clearly not the position

[306] lCang-skya Rol-pa'i-rdo-rje, p. 459.2 (*cha kha* 20b): *dkar po chig thub ces pa'i ming ni zhang tshal pa yan chad du dar rgyas che rgyu med cing zhang tshal pas dkar po chig thub la gtso bor byas pa'i bstan bcos kyang mdzad do// 'jam mgon sa skya paṇ chen gyis dgag pa mdzad yul gyi gtso bo yang 'di yin par snang ngo// phyis kyi rang gzhan mang pos kyang 'di phyogs la dgag pa mang du mdzad par 'dug la/ zhang tshal pa rang gi bzhed pa la ci yang yid la mi byed pa'i phyogs gnas pa yin na dgag pa de dag gnad du 'gro bar snang ste/ zhib par spro ma 'dod do//* Cf. D. S. Lopez (1988), p. 266. The passage was also noted by D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 104, n. 205.

[307] Thu'u-bkwan Chos-kyi-nyi-ma, p. 170.4 (*kha* 25b.4).

of 'performing no mentation at all,' it is evident that the refutations [by Sa-paṇ] in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* were improper." Since Thu'u-bkwan had narrowly specified the *dkar po chig thub* to be precisely "the Great Seal of Maitrīpāda" (*mai tri'i phyag chen dkar po chig thub*), he could attempt to exonerate Zhang here simply on the grounds that such a teaching of "complete non-mentation" (*ci yang yid la mi byed pa*) did not occur in Zhang's work.[308]

The comments of lCang-skya and Thu'u-bkwan seem to show that the discussion was by their time going on at a greater remove from its original context, with only occasional direct reference to what Sa-paṇ or Zhang had actually written. Moreover, both of the latter scholars had close associations with the Manchu Imperial court in Peking, and they could distance themselves—both geographically and doctrinally—from the sectarian frictions of Central Tibet.[309]

dBal-mang dKon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan

The still later A-mdo scholar dBal-mang dKon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan (b. 1764) wrote in 1833 an interesting work that briefly describes a number of key differences between the bKa'-brgyud, rNying-ma and Sa-skya traditions. Though other passages of dPal-mang's work seem more even-handed, in his section 3 on the bKa'-brgyud schools (vol. 6, p. 288.6ff = *cha* 37a), he quotes the *sDom gsum rab dbye* several times with obvious approval. In one passage he gleefully repeats the critical lines of Sa-paṇ that identified the "Neo-Great Seal" with the Ho-shang's discredited teachings, applying these lines to his contemporary "red-hatted" rivals in the "New-Tradition" (*gsar ma*) schools:[310]

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308 Cf. D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 109; and R. Jackson (1982), p. 95. But see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 118, on how Thu'u-bkwan characterized Mo-ho-yen's teachings as similar to the Phyag-chen in his chapter on Chinese Buddhism, f. 13b.

309 See M. Kapstein (1989), pp. 232ff., who gives an excellent sketch contrasting the approaches of Thu'u-bkwan and Sum-pa.

310 dBal-mang dKon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan, p. 292.6 = 39a: *deng sang zhwa dmar po can gyi gsar ma tshos kyang rang rang mying mar rlom pa dang/ phyag chen dang rdzogs chen gcig par rlom nas chos lugs gnyis su gyes pa'i nang gi hwa shang ltar byed pa mang mar snang ste/ sdom gsum rab dbye las/ phyi nas rgyal khrims nub pa dang// rgya nag mkhan po'i gzhung lugs kyi// yi ge tsam la brten nas kyang//....*

> Nowadays one can see many cases of even those red-hatted "New Tradition" followers who pride themselves on being "Old Tradition" and, imagining the Great Seal and Great Perfection to be one and the same, practice like the Hwa-shang who [had represented] one of the two religious tradition into which [Buddhism] had become divided [in those old times]. As is stated in the *sDom gsum rab dbye....*

He goes on (f. 39b) to mention the similarity between the terminology followed by many New and Old traditions such as the Great Seal and Great Perfection whereby the meditative cultivation of Emptiness is called "recognizing the nature of mind" (*sems ngo 'phrod pa*).[311]

Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me

The attitude among the dGe-lugs-pas toward the Great Seal and *dkar po chig thub* controversies was further complicated by the fact that a significant number of them accepted the existence of their own "dGe-ldan Great Seal" tradition (*dge ldan phyag chen*).[312] Evidently the latter tradition, which claimed to descend from Tsong-kha-pa through the so-called dBen-sa snyan-brgyud, received significant support from the eclectic first Paṇ-chen Rin-po-che Blo-bzang-chos-kyi-rgyal-mtshan (1567-1662), though Paṇ-chen bSod-nams-grags-pa (1478-1554) for example had already written a "Great Seal" manual for it. But the 5th Dalai bla-ma Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang-rgya-mtsho (1617-1682)—never a big lover of the original bKa'-brgyud-pa traditions—was not at all pleased that a "dGe-ldan bKa'-brgyud" was springing up in his very midst.[313]

This historical information was provided by Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me (1762-1823), who in his *dGe ldan phyag rgya chen po'i khrid kyi zin bris zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thigs phreng* mainly recorded the explanations of his main teacher 'Jam-dbyangs-bshad-pa II dKon-mchog-

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[311] dBal-mang dKon-mchog-rgyal-mtshan, p. 293 (39b): *gzhan yang phyag chen pa dag dang/ rdzogs chen pa sogs gsar rnying mang po zhig gis/ stong nyid bsgom pa la sems ngo 'phrod pa zhes pa'i tha snyad btags/.*

[312] On the "rDzogs-chen of the dGe-lugs-pa," see S. Karmay (1988), pp. 144-46, who makes many useful observations.

[313] See S. Karmay (1988), p. 146.

'jigs-med-dbang-po (1728-91).[314] Gung-thang in this same work also classified the subject matter as belonging to the middle Wheel of Dharma—i.e. to the doctrinal cycle of the Prajñāpāramitā Sūtras. Even the "Tantric tradition" of the teaching here is said to uphold the same doctrine, though through a special mode of apprehension (*'dzin stangs*). Nevertheless, Gung-thang taught the correct theory to be that the accumulation of Gnosis was most fundamental from among the two preparatory accumulations (*tshogs gnyis*) and that Discriminative Understanding was the chief of the pair, Skillful Means and Understanding.

The same author conceded, however, that in the time of Tsong-kha-pa (1357-1419) himself, the terminology "Great Seal" was not directly applied to these teachings. Rather, this instruction was called "the Great Madhyamaka" (*dbu ma chen po*). However, "Yongs-'dzin rin-po-che" is said to have maintained that Tsong-kha-pa had been actually referring to this "Great Seal" instruction when he mentioned that he had "yet another more profound instruction" in his written *Replies to Red-mda'-ba*.[315]

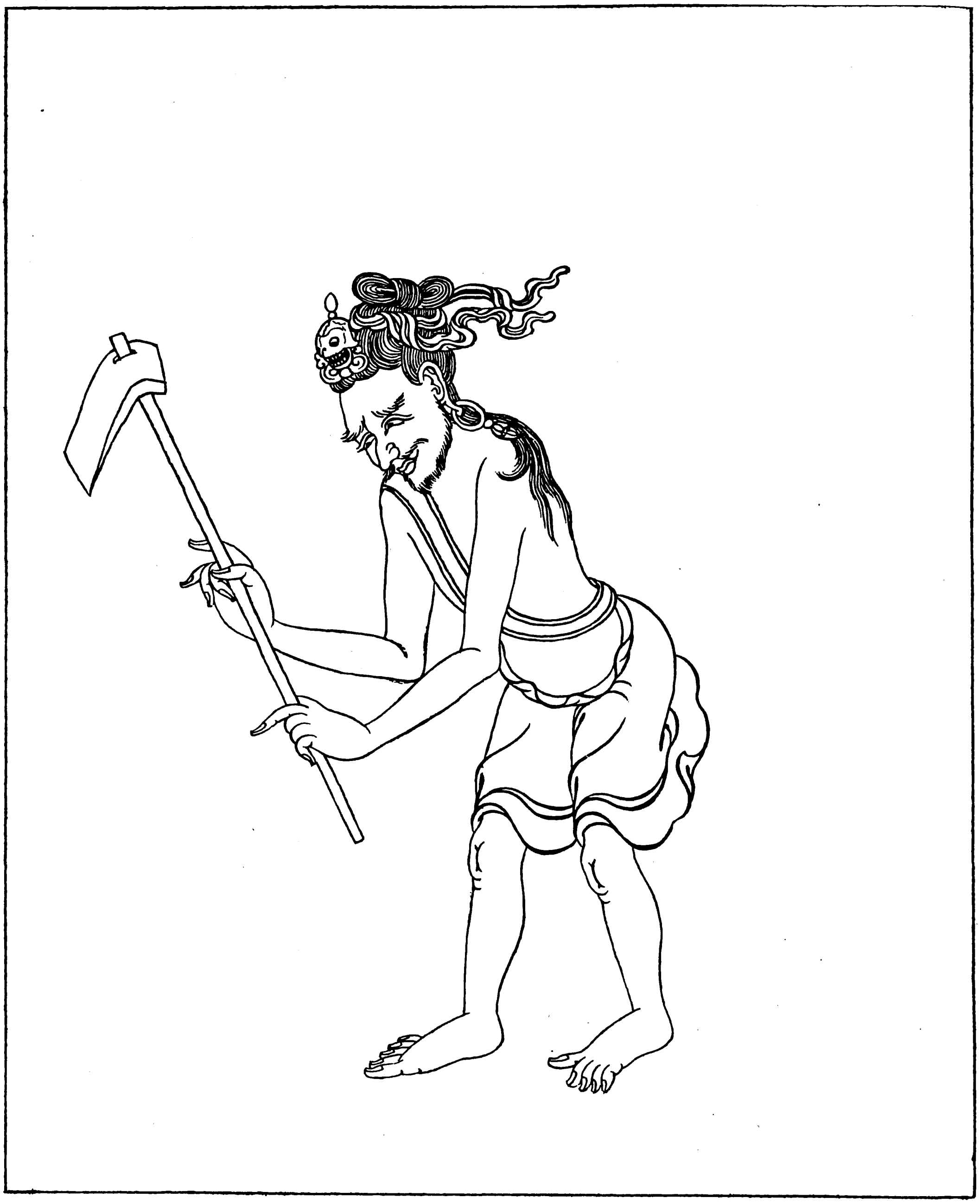
Thus on these topics there existed a surprising diversity of approach and opinion even within the supposedly monolithic "dGe-lugs."

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[314] Gung-thang dKon-mchog-bstan-pa'i-sgron-me, *dGe ldan phyag rgya chen po'i khrid kyi zin bris zhal lung bdud rtsi'i thigs phreng*, Collected Works, vol. 3, pp. 563-619.

One also finds Klong-rdol bla-ma Ngag-dbang-blo-bzang in his *Thig le bcu drug kyi sa bcad* (Collected Works [1991], vol. 1, pp. 155-6) quotes Dwags-po mkhan-chen Ngag-dbang-grags-pa to the effect that (in the context of tantric meditation practice) it is not true that the dGe-lugs-pa has no "singly efficacious white medicine" (*sman dkar po chig thub*) instruction: *de la dwags po mkhan chen ngag dbang grags pas dge lugs pa la sman dkar po chig thub zer ba'i gdams pa med pa min te/ snying rje dbang dang gdams sdom bskyed rim sngon du song na dbu mar rlung sems tshud nas lhan skyes kyi bde chen* [p. 156] *bsgom pa sman dkar po gcig thub lta bu ste/ chos gzhan thos pa bsam pa gang yang byed mi dgos par tshogs kyang kho rang gis bsags/....* I am indebted to Mr. Cyrus Stearns for this reference.

[315] Perhaps the "Yongs-'dzin Rin-po-che" referred to was Tshe-mchog-gling yongs-'dzin Ye-shes-rgyal-mtshan (1713-1793), though another "yongs-'dzin" of this period, Gu-ge yongs-'dzin Blo-bzang-bstan-'dzin (1748-1815), also wrote a manual on the dGe-ldan Phyag-chen.



4. Koṭali (Tog-tse-pa)

7

POSTSCRIPT

One of Sa-paṇ's most influential contributions to the religious and intellectual history of Tibet was no doubt the efforts he made to strengthen rational and critical methods in order to preserve and transmit genuine tradition. He insisted on the importance of discriminative intellectual insight and conceptual clarity, and he sought to apply critical, intellectually rigorous standards carefully and conscientiously in nearly all spheres of religion, philosophy and scholarship. This, I believe, was at the bottom of his great concern with mastering the principles and methodologies of each branch of scholarship, and then propagating them through teaching and writing. Nowhere was this concern made clearer than where he treated differences of doctrine in a controversial or didactic context, trying to evaluate and verify or reject philosophical or doctrinal statements through the use of criteria that were themselves definable and defensible.

But as seen above, his critical method was never that of a rootless agnostic or skeptic. It was always used in the service of tradition, i.e. to defend the recognized doctrines and practices of Indian Buddhism to which he was heir. To be effective, his critical method had to be based on a very wide and deep knowledge of scripture and doctrine. Moreover, learning and reflection were not ends in themselves, nor were they, in Sa-paṇ's view, sufficient means for knowing the absolute. Still, some of his opponents viewed such a rational, critical procedure as a non-productive trap or as a dangerous, potentially self-destructive two-edged sword. These opponents included certain contemporary followers of Tibetan "all-at-once" contemplative traditions, who from the start placed little emphasis on (or even belittled) critical intellectual examination and who affirmed the primacy of direct, non-conceptual apprehension of the ultimate. For his part, Sa-paṇ argued forcefully to the contrary that to maintain Buddhist tradition publicly was part of the duty of a Mahāyāna

master, and that there was no other principled way to do so besides the method of reasoning and scripture. Moreover, in the realm of religious practice, Sa-paṇ maintained that there was no way to prepare oneself for higher yogic insight within the non-Tantric Mahāyāna, apart from an understanding gained through learning and reflection.

That other viewpoints on these controversies continued to be maintained in Tibet was demonstrated by the replies to Sa-paṇ's criticisms by subsequent bKa'-brgyud-pa masters from the 16th century onward, and even by the occasional further questions by and differences between later Sa-skya-pa commentators. Regarding the precise origins of sGam-po-pa's Great Seal teachings, moreover, modern scholars would probably agree that they were complicated and are still not very well understood,[316] much like some of the doctrines that might have influenced their formulation, such as, most notably, the Great Perfection, Zhi-byed[317] and gCod-yul.

Modern readers of Sa-paṇ will find nothing surprising in many of his critical remarks. But certain others of his judgments might seem too narrow and tradition-bound. Modern, more eclectic-minded students of Buddhism, for instance, might ask: "What difference does it make if certain Tibetan traditions were linked to Ch'an traditions through some ancient connection? Isn't Ch'an also a legitimate tradition of Buddhist meditation?" But for a Tibetan Buddhist to admit such a doctrinal link—however ancient and indirect—was a difficult thing to do, precisely because of the bSam-yas debate and its later ramifications.

Faithful modern practitioners of the traditions in question might also

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[316] Some would moreover say that the basic historical question remains unanswered: "How could the non-Tantric doctrine of Mo-ho-yen have been the origin of rDzogs-chen or Phyag-chen traditions, which are largely Mantrayāna-based teachings?" Similar lines of argumentation had in fact been advanced already in the 16th century by Padma-dkar-po and bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, on which see D. Jackson (1990), p. 95, n. 87. Sa-paṇ evidently thought he had recognized some extrinsic, non-Tantric elements as having been newly introduced by sGam-po-pa into the originally Tantra-based lineage of Nāropa and Mar-pa. His criticisms and identifications, however, do not relate to the whole tradition, but rather to only a few restricted aspects of it: for instance, to the non-Tantric "Sūtra-path" practice of introducing the Great Seal as the nature of mind, and to the notion that to realize the nature of mind through such a non-conceptual introduction will suffice to bring about Buddhahood.

[317] Dam-pa Sangs-rgyas, for instance, is said to have taught sGom-pa dMar-sgom the "Instruction on the three 'Singly and Instantaneously Decisive [Factors].'" See 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, p. 809.4 (*na* 21a): *sgom pa dmar sgom la chig chod gsum gyi gdams pa;* G. Roerich, transl., p. 911.

reply: "Even supposing sGam-po-pa did incorporate a few Ch'an or Great Perfection elements (such as from the Sems-sde teachings) into his Phyag-chen instructions—so what? These teachings are of a similar kind, and anyway, as a fully enlightened master, sGam-po-pa knew what he was doing. We put our trust in the blessings of the master, and what really counts after all is the results—the insight of Awakening. Without that, all this 'religious' talk is just a mass of dry words."

In a more general doctrinal context, too, one could reply (as Shākya-mchog-ldan had done) that even the *dkar po chig thub* metaphor is acceptable on the level of theory (*lta ba*) when characterizing insight into the absolute.[318] The ultimate intent of the Buddhas and siddhas is only one. The liberating insight of Awakening *is* the desired "cure." These statements belong primarily to the realm of theory and refer to the fruit.

Meanwhile the main thrust of the innateist and simultaneist traditions has not been effected much by such questions or controversies.[319] They remain today the preeminent meditation lineages of Tibetan Buddhism, the unbroken continuation of generation after generation of highly accomplished masters. They can rightly style themselves, for example, "lineages of the sense" (*don brgyud*) and not of the mere "word," and "lineages of meditative practice" (*sgrub brgyud*), as opposed to lineages of mere exposition. Putting their main emphasis on inner realization, the masters of these traditions have traditionally been less conservative and more iconoclastic regarding outer forms. Amongst themselves the masters of these traditions—namely, of the Phyag-chen, rDzogs-chen and Zhi-byed—have also noticed their common, overriding similarities. Sometimes, too, they have tended to drop certain distinctions of teaching or practice among themselves. And this was quite natural. After all, when one is drunk on the wine of highest realization, one does not draw philosophical or sectarian distinctions![320]

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318 Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Phyag rgya chen po gsal bar byed pa'i bstan bcos tshangs pa'i 'khor los gzhan blo'i dregs pa nyams byed*, Collected Works, vol. 17, p. 344 (7b).

319 Many masters of these traditions did not feel called upon to refute such criticisms. See L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 434, n. 73, and p. 451, n. 130. But some scholastically trained scholars noted the difficulties of maintaining these doctrines in a general Mahāyāna doctrinal context. See for example the case of 'Bri-gung rig-'dzin Chos-kyi-grags-pa, as quoted in D. Jackson (1990), pp. 66f, and mentioned above in note 61. And in fact his comment on the strict impossibility of a *cig car ba* approach had already been taught by 'Jig-rten-mgon-po. See the latter's Collected Works, vol. 3, p. 5.1.

320 'Bri-gung 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, Works, vol. 2, p. 122.

This sort of eclecticism, however, contrasted with another deeply rooted tendency in Tibetan Buddhism, which manifests itself within the simultaneist schools as well. This is the tendency to preserve separately and discreetly the teachings of each lineage. For a tradition to be unmixed (*lugs ma 'dres pa*) was in general a point to be praised and esteemed among Tibetan Buddhists. But for the simultaneist traditions, a certain sort of eclecticism was almost inevitable. By nature they tended to affirm the One behind the multifarious Many. Theirs was a synthesizing, equalizing insight, no doubt akin to what is described on the level of Buddhahood as the Gnosis of Equality (*mnyam pa nyid kyi ye shes*). This insight was not primarily cognizant of the discreetness and diversity of things. For the moment, such analyzing, discriminating insight was suppressed, though on the level of Buddhahood a transformed discrimination, too, was acknowledged as an essential aspect, as for instance in the Gnosis of Analytical Understanding (*so sor rtog pa'i ye shes*).[321]

Two Legends

Were the pair, discrimination and concentrated insight, irreconcilable on the level of meditative practice? And on the doctrinal level, could one balance the tendencies toward eclecticism and conservative traditionalism? There were no easy answers. Each Buddhist meditator or tradition was forced to find its own balance and "middle path" between these contrasting tendencies. Certainly there was something almost paradoxical in the relationship of such complementary "opposites" as the two opposing tendencies among Buddhist practitioners—the gradualist, intellectual analytical procedure of the scholar on the one hand and the simultaneist, innateist realization of the yogi on the other.

That these two poles were somehow inextricably linked would also seem to be expressed, for example, through the legendary life stories of two Tantric adepts of India: Koṭali the mattock-man and Śāntipa the great scholar. It will perhaps be remembered that the early bKa'-brgyud-pa master 'Jig-rten-mgon-po once asserted that sGam-po-pa was similar to the Indian mahāsiddha Tog-rtse-pa ("Mattock-man") in one important

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[321] Cf. also the traditional division of the Buddha's Gnosis into *ji lta ba* and *ji snyed pa mkhyen pa'i ye shes*.

respect: from among the many Indian and Tibetan adepts, these two alone each laid a special emphasis on the direct pointing out of Mind.[322] The common approach of these two might therefore be considered the embodiment of an extreme innateist pole of theory and practice. The opposed gradualist pole, by contrast, could be said to have been embodied in Indian Buddhism by such a great master-scholar and teacher as Ratnākaraśānti, known to the Tibetans as "Shānti-pa." The latter was a highly competent scholar of both the general Mahāyāna and the Mantra Vehicle who at one stage became a doctrinal opponent of Maitrīpāda, according to one tradition. It was indeed Ratnākaraśānti who wrote one of the strongest explicit statements of the danger of excessive faith (within the general Mahāyāna), and the necessity for using the means of knowledge (*pramāṇa*) for gaining the omniscience of Buddhahood—a statement that Sa-paṇ quoted when arguing for the importance of a critical approach within the general Mahāyāna.[323]

But in the legends of the great siddhas, what is the relationship of the Mattock-man and Śāntipa? At first glance, Mattock-man the siddha would seem to have been the hero of both tales. Yet without the master Śāntipa's kind instructions and inspired oversimplifications (pointing out the mind as the field to be tilled), the Mattock-man would never have left off scratching at his little patch of earth. Though he later became Śāntipa's teacher, the Mattock-man could not have become so had he not also been the other's student. Śāntipa, too, was paradoxically both teacher and student of the other. But let the stories speak here for themselves.

The Story of Mattock-man the Solitary Farmer[324]

Once in a remote spot in central India, four day's journey from the city of Rameśvara, a man named Koṭila (the mattock-man) was hoeing on a hillside for the sake of establishing a farm and settling there. As he was working, the great Buddhist teacher Śāntipa, who was on his way back to Magadha, happened to pass by.

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[322] 'Jig-rten-mgon-po, vol. 5, p. 510.

[323] Sa-paṇ, *Phyogs bcu'i...*, p. 324.3 (57a).

[324] The tale has been abridged. Cf. the translations of James B. Robinson (1979), pp. 155-157; and K. Dowman (1985), pp. 238-241, no. 44, who calls the Mattock-man "the peasant guru."

"What are you doing?" asked the great teacher.

After first inquiring politely after the master's health, the man replied: "I am hoeing the hillside."

"Why are you doing that?" asked the teacher.

"All the evil rulers have oppressed and afflicted us, destroying our homeland. And since we have no homeland, I am going to make my home and dwelling here in this spot, after I have excavated this hill."

Śāntipa replied: "If I had a spell and instructions for hoeing hills, wouldn't you want it?"

The Mattock-man said he would, so Śāntipa instructed him as follows:

By such work as yours,
the body has grown tired.
So this is very bad work.
It is six wrong kinds of action:
Hoeing the land is [your] generosity.
Not harming others is moral discipline.
[You have] patience which patiently accepts suffering,
diligence which exerts itself in that,
concentration which is not distracted from that,
and the discriminative understanding which understands that—
Thus you have six wrong kinds of activity.
You should avoid those, and practice the six correct activities.

Revering the teacher is generosity.
Guarding one's own mental continuum is moral discipline.
Patience which patiently accepts the nature of mind,
diligence which cultivates that,
concentration which is not distracted from that,
and the discriminative understanding which understands that—
Cultivate these at all times!

"Please tell me a little more about the meaning of that!" requested Koṭali.

Śāntipa continued: "Revere the teacher. Since all pleasure and pain comes from your own mind, cultivate the sense of one's own primordial mind. Moreover, one's own changeless primordial mind is like the hill. The awareness that is lucid and unceasing is like the hoe. So dig! The pair of (meditation and?) dilligence are like your two arms. You must

always hoe with them." To that he added this verse:

> All pleasure and pain comes from the mind.
> Through instructions, hoe the hill of mind!
> Even though you hoe a hill of dirt,
> you won't realize the primordial great bliss!

The peasant cultivated those teachings, and after twelve years he attained siddhis. After performing many helpful deeds for other beings, he passed directly to the Ḍākiṇī realm in that very body.

The Story of Śāntipa, the Great Scholar[325]

Once in India at the great Buddhist seminary of Vikramaśīla there lived the outstanding scholar Ratnākaraśānti who was known as Śāntipa. A Brahmin by birth, he attained great eminence as a Buddhist teacher who had mastered all traditional arts and sciences.

His fame spread far and wide, and finally reached the ears of a ruler of an island off the southern coast of India. The latter and his people invited Śāntipa to come and teach them the Buddhist doctrine, which the scholar-master after due consideration agreed to do. He spent some three years teaching in that place, and finally returned to India heavily loaded with precious gifts of all sorts.

On his return journey he travelled much of the way overland, and at one point passed through a desolate, mountainous tract that took seven days to cross. It was at this time that he met the peasant Mattock-man and taught him.

After his return to his home monastery, Śāntipa grew old and infirm, and his vision failed. His students drove him around in a buffalo cart, and (since he had lost his teeth) he lived on a diet of finely ground foods. When he reached about one hundred years of age, he entered a twelve-year meditation retreat.

During those same years the peasant Mattock-man, his student, was also in meditation retreat. But while Śāntipa practiced discursive

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325 I have abridged the first part of the story severely. Cf. the translations of James Robinson (1979), pp. 60-64; and K. Dowman (1985), pp. 94-99, no. 12, who calls Shānti-pa "the complacent missionary." I do not know what relation, if any, this legend has to the life of the historical master Ratnākaraśānti.

contemplation, his student was absorbed in non-conceptual insight, and he attained the highest attainment of the Great Seal, dwelling in primordial reality. When Śāntipa left his retreat hut, his students attended him reverently. But when Mattock-man arose from his meditation all the ḍākiṇīs as well as various divinities came to anoint him with nectar and to honor him. They all said: "This is the real Vajrasattva." .... He himself said: "Until I received my guru's instructions, I tilled this external hillside. Now, after gaining his instructions on tilling this hill of the mind, I have won mystic attainment (*siddhi*)."

The great god Indra and his retinue invited Mattock-man to come to such heavens as the divine realm of the Thirty-three. But he refused, saying: "I must go to pay homage to my guru, who is kinder even than the Buddha." ....

With his supernatural vision Mattock-man saw that it would take him six months to make the journey on foot, so instead he projected a mental body which made the journey in an instant. He bowed and paid homage to his guru and the retinue of students. But then he realized that he was invisible to them. He materialized his physical body, and then repeated many times his respects.

"Who are you?" asked the teacher.

"I am your disciple," replied the Mattock-man.

"As I have countless disciples, I do not recognize you."

"I am the the Mattock-man," he replied. Teacher and student then recognized each other, and they happily conversed as some length. Then Śāntipa asked him what attainments he had gained from his practice.

"Following your instructions, I have obtained the attainment of the Great Seal, the highest Dharmakāya," he replied.

"I have given highest priority to teaching, but not to meditative practice," said Śāntipa, "and I have not myself directly experienced the ultimate reality that I teach, while you have devoted yourself primarily to practice, but not to teaching, and have directly encountered the ultimate. I have even forgotten the instructions I gave you. Please return the teachings to me and also show me the attainments you have achieved."

The Mattock-man took Śāntipa to a remote place and revealed many qualities of the Dharmakāya, also returning the instructions to his teacher. Śāntipa then practiced these instructions for twelve more years, whereupon he finally gained the highest attainment of the Great Seal. Then, after serving others faithfully, he passed away to the Ḍākiṇī's Realm.

TEXTS AND TRANSLATIONS

Part I

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF SGAM-PO-PA AND ZHANG

These subjects remain open for discussion, and detailed investigations in the future will no doubt clarify further the main doctrinal points involved, their historical antecedents, and their later ramifications. But when trying to follow such a Tibetan doctrinal controversy, a modern reader must first of all try to discern which doctrinal context each remark belongs to. If presented as a Mantrayāna "fruit" teaching, for instance, many of the doctrines of the Self-sufficient White Remedy would become acceptable even to Sa-paṇ, who had rejected them in a general Mahāyāna doctrinal context. Debaters who fail to clarify from the beginning which level of doctrine is being addressed and which lineages or systems of established tenets are being followed will soon be speaking at complete cross-purposes. Similarly, the modern reader of such a discussion who fails to clarify the same things will soon be completely at sea.

Moreover, before trying to make sense of the later stages of a Tibetan doctrinal discussion, the modern reader should try to ascertain exactly what the main early participants (here, sGam-po-pa, Zhang, and Sa-paṇ) themselves actually said on the relevant points. In order to facilitate this, I present here in translation all the presently known instances of the expression *dkar po chig thub* in the writings of rje sGam-po-pa, bla-ma Zhang, and Sa-skya Paṇḍita.

A. sGam-po-pa's Mentions of the dKar po chig thub

(1) The Reply to Phag-mo-gru-pa's Questions

A first occurrence of the phrase *dkar po chig thub* in sGam-po-pa's writings is in his reply to the questions of his learned and accomplished

Khams-pa disciple Phag-mo-gru-pa rDo-rje-rgyal-po. There he speaks of the realization he teaches as being utterly beyond the range of intellectual understanding (being "unknown even by a greatly learned man or *paṇḍita*" and beyond the range of a dialectician) and asserts that it is only arises through the grace of an accomplished teacher who transmits it non-verbally and non-conceptually to a devoted, reverential disciple. Even the greatest scholars such as Nāgārjuna can assert nothing regarding its nature. He adds:

> When it has arisen, since this has become a Self-sufficient White [Remedy], i.e. full liberation through knowing one thing, Buddha[hood] is acquired in oneself."

To translate the passage in full:

> [Phag-mo-gru-pa] asked: "In that case, by what is the nature acquired?"
>
> [sGam-po-pa replied:] "It is acquired through the sustaining spiritual impulse of the guru, from one's own reverence and devotion, and by the power of meditatively cultivating through diligent effort, whereas otherwise it will not be acquired. For as it is also stated in the *Hevajra Tantra:*
>
> > The innately born is not told by another, and it is not received from anyone. It is known through observing the timely sacrifices for the guru, as a result of one's own merit.[326]
>
> "This is not known by a learned scholar, a paṇḍita. It is not realized through discriminative understanding. It is beyond the range of a dialectician. For the nature to arise in the mind: it will arise without words, [in a way] beyond the range of intellect, by the power of the sustaining spiritual impulse, from a guru who possesses realization, by a student who respects and reveres him. Its nature is devoid of any assertion [that can be made], even by greatly learned scholars such as

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[326]The first quote is *Hevajra Tantra* I viii 36, which differs a little in its canonical version and Sanskrit original, for instance by having the instrumental case in the final two lines. See D. Snellgrove ed., pt. 2, pp. 28-29:

gzhan gyis brjod min lhan cig skyes// gang du yang ni mi myed de//
bla ma'i dus thabs bsten pa yis// bdag gis bsod nams las shes bya//

The Sanskrit: *nānyena kathyate sahajaṃ na kasminn api labhyate//*
ātmanā jñāyate puṇyād guruparvopasevayā//

The term *dus thabs* is Skt. *parva* "observance, sacrifice offered at a fixed time."

Nāgārjuna. As it is said in the *Hevajra* [*Tantra*]:[327]

> There is no meditator, nor anything to be cultivated in meditation. No deity, nor any mantra. There is not even the slightest thing to be cultivated in meditation. The deity and mantra reside in a nature possessing no [conceptual] elaborations.

"And as stated in the *Mañjuśrī*[*nāmasaṃgīti*, v. 86]:[328]

> He realizes the three times as time-less; he understands all benefits for all living beings.

"Accordingly, when it has arisen, since this has become a Self-sufficient White [Remedy], i.e. full liberation through knowing one thing, Buddha[hood] is acquired in oneself. Since by that, the fetter that binds one to cyclic existence has been loosed of itself, one's own mind achieves the level of great bliss."

The Tibetan text, *rJe phag mo gru pa'i zhus lan* pp. 471.6-472 (*da* 236a-b), cf. rTsibs-ri spar-ma *ca* 2, f. 4b:

'o na ngo bo gang gis rnyed pa lags zhus pas/

bla ma'i byin brlabs dang/ rang gi mos gus dang/ brtson 'grus kyis bsgoms pa'i stobs las rnyed kyi/ de las gzhan du mi rnyed de/ de yang dgyes pa rdo rje las/

> *gzhan gyis brjod min lhan cig skyes// gang du yang ni mi rnyed de//*
> *bla ma'i dus thabs bsten pa dang// rang gi bsod nams las shes bya//*

ces so//

'di mkhas pa paṇḍi tas kyang mi shes/ shes rab kyis mi rtogs/ rtog ge ba'i spyod yul ma yin| [p. 472 = 236b] *ngo bo rgyud la skye ba la bla ma rtogs ldan cig la slob mas mos gus byas byin brlabs kyi stobs kyis tshig dang bral ba blo'i yul las 'das pa las rab 'char te/ ngo bo 'phags pa klu sgrub la*

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327 This is *Hevajra Tantra* I v 11, the canonical Tibetan in Snellgrove's edition being:
bsgom pa po med sgom pa'ang med// lha med sngags kyang yod ma yin//
spros pa med pa'i rang bzhin las// sngags dang lha ni yang dag gnas//.

328 The text in the Peking edition, vol. 1, p. 120.3.6 (*rgyud ka* 5b) is apparently corrupt: *dus gsum dus med rtogs par gnas// sems can kun kyi glu chen po//.* The actual reading in Tibetan should be: *dus gsum dus med rtogs pa po|| sems can kun gyi klu chen po||.* See Ronald Davidson (1981), p. 56, *tryadhvānadhvagatiṃgataḥ/ sarvasattvamahānāgo...*, and translation, v. 86: "Beyond the filth of all defilements, he thoroughly comprehends the three times and timelessness; he is the great snake (*mahānāga*) for all beings, the crown of those crowned with qualities." See also Mañjuśrīmitra's commentary, Peking Tanjur, *rgyud 'grel si* 18b.7 (vol. 74, p. 179.4.7): *da (=de?) ltar byung ba ste dus gsum las 'das pas na dus gsum dus med rtogs pa po// dam pa'i chos kyi bdud rtsi'i char gyis sems can gyi rgyud tshim par mdzad pa'i phyir sems can kun gyi klu chen po'o//.*

sogs pa mkhas pa rnams kyang khas len dang bral ba yin te/ dgyes pa'i rdo rje las/

bsgom pa po med bsgom bya med// lha med sngags kyang yod ma yin//
bsgom par bya ba cung zad med// spros pa med pa'i rang bzhin la//
lha dang sngags na yang dag gnas//

shes pa dang/ 'jam dpal las kyang/

dus gsum dus med rtogs pa po// sems can kun gyi don kun rig//

ces gsungs pas/ de skyes pa'i dus na/ dkar po cig thub cig shes kun grol du song bas/ sangs rgyas rang la rnyed/ des 'khor bar 'dzin pa'i sgrog rang gdal du 'gro bas/ rang sems bde ba chen po'i sa non bya ba yin gsung/.

(2) The First Occurrence of the Expression in his Reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa

A second place where the expression *dkar po chig thub* appears in sGam-po-pa's writings is near the beginning of his reply to the questions of Karma-pa Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa.[329] The latter had received instruction from sGam-po-pa, and then after a few days of meditating, he underwent an experience of great lucidity, though he had had no idea where it had come from. sGam-po-pa advised him:

> That is the "Self-sufficient White [Remedy]." Such will always occur tomorrow, the next day, and later, and therefore you should use a warm curtain behind you, wear thin clothing, and so meditate. You will probably be able to bind consciousness (*shes pa*) to your service.

The Tibetan, *Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan,* p. 376.7 (*tha* 187b), cf. rTsibs-ri spar-ma, *ca* 3, f. 1b-2b:

bla ma rin po che la phyis kho bos gdam ngag cig zhus nas/ bsgom pas zhag 'ga' lon pa dang gang nas byung cha med pa'i gsal sing nge ba'i nyams cig byung zhus pas/

de dkar po chig thub bya ba yin gsung/ sang gnangs dang dus phyis rtag tu de tsug 'ong ba yin pas rgyab yol dro bar gyis/ gos bsrab par gyis las [=la?] *bsgoms dang/ shes pa* [b]*kol tu btub par 'dug gis gsung/*

[329] See also D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 103 and n. 202.

(3) A Second Occurrence in his Reply to Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa

The third known usage by sGam-po-pa of the expression is found in the same work. In this context, Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa had requested explanations of the tantric Path of Means (*thabs lam*). sGam-po-pa's reply (*ibid.*, p. 380 = 189a-b) stressed the sufficiency of the very thing that he always taught (*kun tu bshad pa des chog*). To give a complete translation of the passage:

> Moreover, one day [Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa] told [sGam-po-pa] that he would like to request the Path of Means [instructions].
>
> [sGam-po-pa] replied: "That very thing that I always teach will do. If you don't meditatively cultivate that, then in the intermediate stage (*bar do*) it will not help even if you know the practical instructions. If you, too, are able to cultivate that still more, it will suffice to foster just that. Also at the time of the intermediate stage it should be cultivated. The Clear Light will follow it. The natural Clear Light will come out to welcome [you] in advance."
>
> [Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa then] asked: "If I am able to cultivate [it], will that suffice?"
>
> [rJe sGam-po-pa] replied: "The 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy]' refers to that. I, too, have nothing besides that."[330]

The Tibetan text:

yang nyin cig thabs lam zhu byas pas/ de go kun tu bshad pa des [189b] *chog/ ma bsgoms na bar dor gdam ngag shes kyang mi phan/ khyed rang yang da rung bsgom nus na de skyangs pas chog par 'dug/ bar do'i dus tshod du yang bsgom 'od gsal de'i rjes su 'brang/ rang bzhin gyi 'od gsal gyis rngon* [=sngon] *bsu ba yin gsung/*

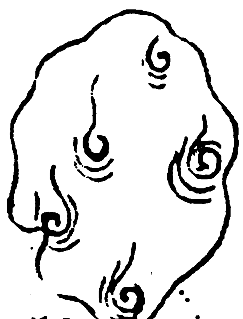
bsgom nus na des chog gam zhus pas/

rin po che'i zhal nas/ dkar po cig thub de la byed pa yin/ nga la yang de las med gsung/

[330] Compare also the statement in sGam-po-pa's Collected Works, vol. 2, p. 327.5: "I have nothing else to view besides the 'Nature of Mind' (*sems nyid*) alone": *nga la blta rgyu sems nyid gcig pu las med.*

Summary

Thus sGam-po-pa used the phrase *dkar po chig thub* with a definite awareness of its meaning as a self-sufficient remedy. (This was its original medical meaning, and he, the Doctor of Dwags-po [*dwags po lha rje*], had after all been initially trained as a physician before becoming a great meditator.) In the first instance he employed the expression when describing to Phag-mo-gru-pa how the insight imparted through this teaching was enough to enable one to find the Buddhahood within oneself: "Because this has become a Self-sufficient White [Remedy], i.e. full liberation through knowing one thing,..." In the first usage with Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa, such a nuance is not so obvious from the context. But he used the phrase to characterize very positively the first meditative experience of great lucidity that had arisen for Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa after the latter had been instructed and had meditated for a few days. He called it a "Self-sufficient White [Remedy]" and predicted that it would continually arise in the future, also predicting that Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa would have success in bringing consciousness under his control. The second time he used the words with Dus-gsum-mkhyen-pa, however, he employed them to stress precisely the sufficiency of the Great Seal insight he normally taught, and to say that such specialized Tantric instructions as on the *bar do* would be of no use if one had not mastered this most central of teachings.



དཀར་པོ་ཆིག་ཐུབ་རྩ་ཁ་གཅིག་བཞེད།།

B. Zhang Tshal-pa's Mentions of the dKar po chig thub

(1) A First Occurrence in the *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug*

Zhang Tshal-pa's most important use of the *dkar po chig thub* metaphor is traditionally held to be found in his Great Seal treatise the *Phyag rgya chen po lam zab mthar thug*, one chapter of which is entitled "Showing it [i.e. the Great Seal] to be a Self-sufficient White [Remedy]" (*dKar po chig thub tu bstan pa*). Zhang nowhere explicitly defined the expression *dkar po chig thub* in this chapter or elsewhere, and he actually used it only once there, and then merely in the title appearing at the chapter's end. There the words are used metaphorically to characterize the main point of the chapter: that the realization of the nature of mind is sufficient in and of itself to bring about spontaneously and instantaneously the simultaneous consummation of all virtuous qualities, including Buddhahood itself. This point is succinctly expressed in the opening verse (rTsibs-ri ed., p. 107.5; *nga* 2, f. 30a.5):

> In the moment of realizing [the true nature of] your own mind, all "white" (i.e. excellent, virtuous) qualities without exception are effortlessly completed simultaneously.
>
> *rang sems rtogs pa'i skad cig mar// dkar po'i yon tan ma lus pa// bsgrub pa med par dus gcig rdzogs//*

Probably there is a play on the word *dkar po chig thub* here, since the word "white" (*dkar po)* appears once, and the element "one" (*cig/gcig)* appears twice. Here, however, "white" (*dkar po)* is a quality of what comes to completion, instead of the agent effecting that, and *cig/gcig* forms a part of both the ideas of "an instant" *skad cig ma* and "simultaneous" *dus gcig.*

Zhang makes similar points earlier in the treatise, for instance in the first chapter, where he says:

> [When] you definitely understand [the nature of] your own mind, all the Gnoses of Nirvāṇa will arise as great bliss. Therefore, since everything without exception issues forth from your own mind alone,

> if you recognize the reality of your own mind, you will come to know the reality of all sentient beings. [By] knowing that, you know all dharmas such as Nirvāṇa. Thoroughly understanding all dharmas, you pass beyond the whole of the three-realm [universe]. *By knowing the one, you becomes learned in all.* If the root falls over, the leaves naturally fall over. Therefore establish only [the nature of] your own mind!

The Tibetan, rTsib-ri ed., p. 53 (*nga* 2, f. 3a):

rang sems nges rtogs mya ngan 'das pa yi//
ye shes mtha' yas bde ba chen por shar//
de phyir ma lus rang gi sems nyid las//
'phros phyir rang sems chos nyid ngo shes na//
sems can kun gyi chos nyid shes par 'gyur//
de shes mya ngan 'das sogs chos kun shes//
chos kun yongs shes khams gsum kun las 'das//
gcig shes pas ni kun la mkhas par 'gyur//
rtsa ba 'gyel bas lo 'dab ngang gis 'gyel//
de phyir rang sems gcig pu gtan la dbab//

(2) A Second Occurrence in the Same Treatise

A second case of the usage of this expression is found in another section of the same work, the brief chapter on vows or "pledges" (*dam tshig*). Here Zhang presents this tradition as a system of practice in which the ordinary monastic vows are taken to be mainly the concern of "beginners." The system includes the achieving of: special Tantric yogas, the experience of non-conceptualization, the nature of one's own mind, non-duality, and the "not going beyond the true nature of things" (*dbyings las mi 'da' ba'i don*). This entire short ninth chapter (rTsib-ri ed., pp. 99-100; *nga* 2, f. 26a-b) could be translated as follows:

> How are the pledges to be observed? While a beginner, you should not break the command of the Sugata-Guru, i.e. the vows such as the Pratimokṣa [monastic discipline]. (1)
> When cultivating the "channels" (*rtsa*) and "winds" (*rlung*), you should abandon all things not conducive to bliss and heat.
> After the experience of non-conceptualizing (*mi rtog*) has arisen, you

should avoid all factors inimical to meditative absorptions (*samādhi*). (2)
Having seen the nature of your own mind, you should abandon all harm to the mind.
After the realization of non-duality has arisen, you should avoid all specially directed activities (*ched du bya ba*). (3)
In all cases your own mind should be made the "judge" (lit.: "the witnessing arbiter" *dpang po*).
Having realized the reality of not going outside "the true nature of things" (*dbyings*), that "nothing-to-be-guarded" (or: "the unguardable," *srung du med*) is the highest pledge. [It] is called the "Self-sufficient White [Remedy]." (4)

dam tshig ji ltar bsrung zhe na// dang po'i las pa'i dus tshod du//
so so thar pa'i sdom pa sogs// bde gshegs bla ma'i bka' mi bcag// (1)
rtsa rlung bsgom pa'i dus tshod du// bde drod mi mthun phyogs rnams spang//
mi rtog nyams myong shar gyur nas// ting 'dzin 'gal rkyen thams cad spang// (2)
rang sems ngo bo mthong gyur nas// sems la gnod pa thams cad spang//
gnyis med rtogs pa shar nas ni// ched du bya ba thams cad spang// (3)
kun la rang sems dpang por zhog// dbyings las mi [26b] *'da'i don rtogs nas//*
srung du med de dam tshig mchog// dkar po gcig thub bya ba yin// (4)
dam tshig le'u ste dgu pa'o// //

(3) An Occurrence in Zhang's *Man ngag snying po gsal ba'i bstan bcos*

The third and last place where bla-ma Zhang is known to have used the expression is in a briefer instructional treatise, the *Man ngag snying po gsal ba'i bstan bcos*. Here Zhang stresses the need for the disciple's previous preparation and for the guru's grace, and says (p. 705.7-706.1) that when through those conditions one knows the ultimate reality of one's own mind (*rang gi sems kyis* [=kyi] *de kho na nyid rtogs par gyur na*), one goes in that very moment to the highest level of all the Buddhas (*dus gsum gyis sangs rgyas thams cad kyi go 'phang mchog skad cig de nyid la bsgrod par byed do//*). Others of less merit, however, will not understand this doctrine, and therefore he warns that it is important to keep it very secret.

How to gain the master's grace and hence the ultimate insight? He explains (p. 711.7):

> That which gladdens the guru
> brings about perfect completeness without depending on anything [else];
> that is the great "Self-sufficient White [Remedy]."
>
> *gang gis bla* [712] *ma mnyes byed pa// gang la'ang mi ltos phun sum 'tshogs//*
> *dkar po chig thub chen po yin//*

The second line is a gloss of the phrase *dkar po chig thub*, similar to sGam-po-pa's placing of the phrase *cig shes kun grol* in apposition to *dkar po chig thub* in one of his usages of the expression.

Zhang expressed very similar teachings in his *Phyag chen lam zab mthar thug* (rTsib-ri ed.), pp. 78.6-79.1 (15b-16a), though there two factors are stressed as necessary for the attainment of realization: the teacher's grace and the student's previously acquired merit. (Zhang based himself here no doubt on the *Hevajra Tantra* I viii 36 quoted also by sGam-po-pa.) Later in that same work (p. 96, 24b.1), he stressed the master's grace as the singly decisive factor: *bla ma'i byin brlabs 'ba' zhig yin//.* Zhang devoted another brief treatise to the importance of the guru's grace: *gNad kyi man ngag*, Writings, pp. 696.7-703.5, and stressed the same point in his *Mal dbu dkar la gdams pa*, p. 656.4.

Summary

Zhang Tshal-pa thus used the expression *dkar po chig thub* metaphorically in the three differing contexts of soteriology, gnoseology, and ethics. In each case it characterized a single factor that was believed to be sufficient to effect the highest good. In his view: (1) the evocation of the awakened guru's spiritual power or grace is sufficient by itself to effect realization in the qualified student, (2) the insight into the nature of mind so conferred to the disciple is sufficient to actualize all enlightened qualities and realizations, and (3) the liberating insight into the nature of mind likewise has the power to resolve all moral dilemmas.

Part II

EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF SA-SKYA PAṆḌITA

In the pages that follow, I will present all occurrences of the expression *dkar po chig thub* that I have been able to locate in the writings of Sa-skya Paṇḍita. These occurrences are found in the following four treatises:

1. *sDom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba*
2. *sKyes bu dam pa rnams la spring ba'i yi ge*
3. *Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba*
4. *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems pa rnams la zhu ba'i 'phrin yig*

These writings (here arranged in their approximate chronological order) are all mature works of Sa-paṇ. Two of them—the *sDom gsum rab dbye* and *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*—are independent "technical treatises" (*bstan bcos: śāstra*) on Buddhist doctrine. Of this pair, the *sDom gsum rab dbye* is to a large extent a critical or controversial treatise. In it, Sa-paṇ uses an exposition of the interrelations and distinctions between the three systems of vows as the framework within which he makes many criticisms of contemporary Tibetan Buddhist theories and practices. He mentions the *dkar po chig thub*, for instance, in chapter 3, where he investigates the tantric system of vows, in the sub-section in which he examines Great Seal traditions.

The second of the two major doctrinal treatises—(no. 3) the *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*—also contains a number of such criticisms of contemporary traditions, but here they are much less prominent, the main line of exposition being concerned mainly with setting forth positively the path of the Bodhisattva's practices, following a traditional ordering of key topics as found in one verse of the MSA (XIX 61-62). The mentions of the *dkar po chig thub* occur in the chapter on the Six Perfections, in the section on the Perfection of Discriminative Understanding.

The remaining two works (nos. 2 and 4) are both epistles of sorts (*sprin yig /'phrin yig*). The first is addressed by Sa-paṇ to the "noble individuals"—i.e. excellent Buddhist practitioners—of Tibet. The second is a petition formally addressed to all Buddhas and bodhisattvas throughout the universe. Both epistles were meant to explain and justify his previous critical investigations and discussions of other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. They can be viewed as summaries and further clarifications of the comments made in the *sDom gsum rab dbye* and *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal* treatises.

The following translations of these extracts basically follow the texts as preserved in the Derge edition of Sa-paṇ's collected writings, and as reprinted in the *Sa skya pa'i bka' 'bum* (Tokyo: Tōyō Bunko, 1968), vol. 5. For the sake of convenience, I have used the same verse numbering for the *sDom gsum rab dbye* as in J. Rhoton (1985). Eventually these and all other important writings of Sa-paṇ will need to be critically edited.

A. Criticisms of the Self-sufficient White Remedy in the *sDom gsum rab dbye*

(1) The First Occurrence (p. 309.2.2-309.4.2 [*na* 25b-26b])

Even if [they] cultivate the Great Seal, it is merely a cultivation of the closing off (*kha 'tshom*) of discursive thought. Regarding the Gnosis born from the two stages [of tantric meditation practice], they do not know [it] as the Great Seal.

The meditative cultivation of the Great Seal by the ignorant is taught to be for the most part a cause of [rebirth] as an animal. If not [reborn as an animal], they are born in the sphere lacking even fine material (*arūpadhātu*). Or else they fall into the cessation of the Śrāvaka.[331]

Even though that meditation may be excellent, it is not higher than the meditation of the Madhyamaka. Though that meditation of the Madhyamaka is indeed excellent, still it is very difficult to be realized.

As long as the two preparatory assemblages are not completed, for so long will that meditative cultivation not reach perfection. The completion of the two preparatory assemblages is taught to require an innumerable aeon.

Our Great Seal is the Gnosis arisen from tantric consecration[332] and the spontaneously arisen Gnosis that has arisen from the samādhi of the two stages. The realization of this can be achieved in this life if one is skilled in means.[333] The Buddha taught no other realization of the Great Seal besides that.

Therefore, if you feel confident appreciation for the Great Seal, practice it according to the basic scriptures of the Mantra tradition.

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331 Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 228b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 241; bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 281b = Lhalungpa (1986), p. 299; and bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 289a-b = Lhalungpa (1986), p. 307.

332 Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 229a = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 241; 'Gos lo-tsā-ba, p. 632.7-633 (*nya* 141b-142a), G. Roerich, transl., p. 724f; M. Broido (1985), p. 12.

333 Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 97b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 108.

Regarding the present-day Great Seal and the Great Perfection (*rdzogs chen*) of the Chinese tradition, in substance they are without difference, except in a change in the designation of names of "descending from above" and "climbing from below" as "Simultaneist" and "Gradualist."[334]

The appearance of such a religious tradition occurred in exact accord with what the Bodhisattva Śāntarakṣita had foretold to the king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan. Listen, for I shall relate that prophesy:

> "O king, here in this Tibetan land of yours, the [traditions of] the non-Buddhist Indian sectarians will not arise because the Ācārya Padmasambhava has entrusted [it] to the twelve guardian deities (*brtan ma*).
> Nevertheless, through the cause of several interdependent [causes and conditions], the [Buddhist] religious tradition will become twofold. And regarding that, to begin with, a Chinese monk will appear after my death and will teach a Simultaneist path called the 'Self-sufficient White [Remedy].'[335]
> At that time, invite from India my student the great scholar called Kamalaśīla, and he will refute him. Then, order that the faithful should practice in accord with his religious tradition."

Afterwards everything came to pass just as he had said. After the disappearance of that Chinese tradition, the religious tradition of the Gradualist was widely propagated. Later the royal polity disappeared, and based on merely the written texts of the fundamental treatises of the Chinese master, they secretly changed the designation of the name of that [tradition] to the Great Seal. This having been done, the Great Seal of the present day is for the most part a Chinese religious tradition.[336]

As for that which is the Great Seal of Nāropa and Maitrīpāda—those respected one[s] maintained that very thing just as it is mentioned in the Mantra [tradition] Tantra: "That [*mudrā* includes] *karma*, *dharma*, *samaya* and *Mahāmudrā*." Ārya Nāgārjuna, too, taught [the *Mahāmudrā*] thus as

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[334] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 13, n. 16; S. Karmay (1988), p. 198, n. 103; and L. van der Kuijp (1984), p. 171. Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 93b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 105.

[335] Cf. S. Karmay (1988), p. 199 and n. 108.

[336] See D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 101f; and S. Karmay (1988), p. 198, n. 102. Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 94a-b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 105. For further references, see D. Jackson (1990), p. 95, n. 87 and (1987), p. 47f.

the fourth *mudrā*: "If, by not understanding the *karmamudrā* one does not understand the *dharmamudrā*, the understanding of even the name of the *Mahāmudrā* will be impossible."[337] In the other great Tantras and great treatises too, the Great Seal has been prohibited to the person who is unconnected with tantric consecration.

If one understands the Great Seal that is the Gnosis arisen from the consecration,[338] there is no longer any dependence on all efforts possessing phenomenal marks (*mtshan ma*).

Nowadays some people, having transformed the mind [of the student] through mere reverence toward the guru, introduce a partial cessation of conceptual thought as the Great Seal.[339]

The Tibetan text, chapter III, verses 160-182 (pp. 309.2.2-309.4.2 = *na* 25a-26a):

phyag rgya chen po bsgom na yang// rtog pa kha 'tshom nyid bsgom gyi// rim gnyis las byung ye shes la// (160) *phyag rgya chen por mi shes so//*

blun po phyag rgya che bsgom pa// phal cher dud 'gro'i rgyu ru gsungs// min na gzugs med khams su skye// (161) *yang na nyan thos 'gog par ltung//*

gal te de ni bsgom legs kyang// dbu ma'i bsgom las lhag pa med// dbu ma'i bsgom de bzang mod kyi// 162) *'on kyang 'grub pa shin tu*

[337] Sa-paṇ in his ThGS, 50b-51a, attributes this passage to the *Caturmudrāniścaya* of [the Tantric] Nāgārjuna. A similar passage is found in the canonical version of P. 3069 *Phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*, vol. 68, p. 259.2.6 (*rgyud 'grel mi* 82b): *chos kyi phyag rgya ma shes pas las kyi phyag rgya bcos ma 'ba' zhig las lhan cig skyes pa'i rang bzhin bcos ma ma yin pa ji ltar 'byung zhing skye bar 'gyur/.* Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, 88b-89b; L. Lhalungpa (1988), p. 100, where a work by the same title is attributed to Maitrīpāda. This work was apparently by a "Klu-sgrub-snying-po" who quotes as an authority (f. 82b.6) the famous *rTen 'brel snying po* verse beginning: *bsal bar ba ba ci yang med// gzhag pa bya ba cung zad med//....* There was a work entitled *Phyag rgya bzhi pa* attributed to Nāgārjuna whose authenticity was doubted by certain scholars of both India and Tibet. See Shākya-mchog-ldan, *Legs bshad gser gyi thur ma*, vol. 7, p. 81.6-83.5. This doubt is also briefly addressed by Go-rams-pa, *sDom gsum ... 'khrul spong*, p. 263.1.5 (45b).

[338] Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 98b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 109. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal attributes this to the ThGS.

[339] Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 230b = L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 242.

dka'//

ji srid tshogs gnyis ma rdzogs pa// de srid bsgom de mthar mi phyin//
'di yi tshogs gnyis rdzogs pa la// (163) *bskal pa grangs med dgos par gsungs//*

nged kyi phyag rgya chen po ni// dbang las byung ba'i ye shes dang//
rim pa gnyis kyi ting 'dzin las// (164) *'byung ba'i rang byung ye shes yin//*

'di yi rtogs pa gsang sngags kyi// thabs la mkhas na tshe 'dir 'grub//
de las gzhan du phyag rgya che// (165) *rtogs pa sangs rgyas kyis ma gsungs//*

des na phyag rgya chen po la// mos na gsang sngags gzhung bzhin sgrubs//
da lta'i phyag rgya chen po dang// (166) *rgya nag lugs kyi rdzogs chen la//*

yas 'bab dang ni mas 'dzegs gnyis// rim gyis pa dang cig char bar//
ming 'dogs bsgyur ba ma gtogs pa// (167) *don la khyad par dbye ba med//*

chos lugs 'di 'dra 'byung ba yang// byang chub sems dpa' zhi ba 'tshos// [26a]
rgyal po khri srong sde btsan la// (168) *lung bstan ji bzhin thog tu bab//*

lung bstan de yang bshad kyis nyon// rgyal po khyod kyi bod yul 'dir//
slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis// (169) *brtan ma bcu gnyis la gtad pas//*

mu stegs 'byung bar mi 'gyur mod// 'on kyang rten 'brel 'ga' yi rgyus//
chos lugs gnyis su 'gro bar 'gyur// (170) *de yang thog mar nga 'das nas//*

rgya nag dge slong byung nas ni// dkar po chig thub ces bya ba//
cig char pa yi lam ston 'gyur// (171) *de tshe nga yi slob ma ni//*

mkhas pa chen po ka ma la// shī la zhes bya rgya gar nas//
spyan drongs de yis de sun 'byin// (172) *de nas de yi chos lugs bzhin//*

dad ldan rnams kyis spyod cig gsung// de yis ji skad gsungs pa bzhin//
phyi nas thams cad bden par gyur// (173) *rgya nag lugs de nub mdzad nas//*

rim gyis pa yi chos lugs spel// phyi nas rgyal khrims nub pa dang//
rgya nag mkhan po'i gzhung lugs kyi// (174) *yi ge tsam la brten nas*

kyang//

de yi ming 'dogs gsang nas ni// phyag rgya chen por ming bsgyur nas//
da lta'i phyag rgya chen po ni// (175) *phal cher rgya nag lugs yin//*

nā ro dang ni me tri pa'i// phyag rgya chen po gang yin pa//
de ni las dang chos dang ni// (176) *dam tshig dang ni phyag rgya che//*

gsang sngags rgyud nas ji skad du// gsungs pa de nyid khong bzhed do//
'phags pa klu sgrub nyid kyis kyang// (177) *phyag rgya bzhi par 'di skad gsung//*

las kyi phyag rgya ma shes pas// chos kyi phyag rgya'ang mi shes na//
phyag rgya chen po'i ming tsam yang// (178) *rtogs pa nyid ni mi srid gsung//*

rgyud kyi rgyal po gzhan dang ni// bstan bcos chen po gzhan las kyang//
dbang bskur dag dang ma 'brel [26b] *ba//* (179) *de la phyag rgya chen po bkag//*

dbang bskur ba las byung ba yi// ye shes phyag rgya che rtogs na//
da gzod mtshan ma dang bcas pa'i// (180) *'bad rtsol kun la mi ltos so//*

deng sang 'ga' zhig bla ma yi// mos gus tsam gyis sems bsgyur nas//
rtog pa cung zad 'gags pa la// (181) *phyag rgya chen po'i ngo sprod byed//*

(2) The Second Occurrence (p. 313.3.1-3 [*na* 34a])

Some say that the three "Bodies" (*kāya*) [of Buddhahood] arise as an effect from a Self-sufficient White [Remedy] (*dkar po chig thub*). However, an effect cannot arise from a single [cause or condition]. Even if an effect could arise from a single [cause or condition], that result, too, would be a single thing, like the cessation (*nirodha*) of the Śrāvaka.[340]

Some say that the dedication of merit is needed after cultivating this "singly efficacious" (*chig thub*) [practice]. In that case the "singly efficacious" would become two-fold. If, in addition to that, one requires

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[340] For a discussion of this verse and Padma-dkar-po's replies, see D. Jackson (1990), p. 48ff.

such things as going for refuge, the generation of *bodhicitta*, and meditative practice involving a tutelary deity, the "singly efficacious" would be manifold. Therefore, such a tradition of a "singly efficacious" (*chig thub*) [practice] has not been taught by the Buddha.[341]

The Tibetan text, chapter III, 346-350:

kha cig dkar po chig thub las// (346) *'bras bu sku gsum 'byung zhes zer//*
gcig las 'bras bu 'byung mi nus// gal te gcig las 'bras bu zhig//

byung yang nyan thos 'gog pa bzhin// (347) *'bras bu de yang gcig tu 'gyur//*
'ga' zhig chig thub bsgoms pa yi// rjes la bsngo ba bya dgos zer//

'o na chig thub gnyis su 'gyur// (348) *de la'ang skyabs 'gro sems bskyed dang//*
yi dam lha bsgom la sogs pa// dgos na chig thub du mar 'gyur//

des na chig thub 'di 'dra'i lugs// (349) *rdzogs sangs rgyas kyis gsungs pa med//*

(3) The Third Occurrence (p. 315.4.4-5 [*na* 38b]):

The Conqueror has taught in all Sūtras and Tantras that the root of all dharmas is emptiness whose essence is compassion, i.e. the integration of [skillful] means and discriminative understanding.

Some say that simple freedom from discursive elaborations is the Self-sufficient White [Remedy]. I fear that this, too, alters the essentials. Even though a few other doctrines that are not essentials may be incomplete or redundant, or are a little bit mistaken, this will not be capable of producing a great fault. If the essentials of the Teaching are altered, however good the other [parts of] the teaching are, one will not attain Buddhahood [thereby].

The Tibetan text, chapter III, 447-49:

gnad rnams min pa'i chos gzhan 'ga'// ma tshang ba dang lhag pa

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[341] For a discussion of this passage, see D. Jackson (1990), pp. 35f.

dang// (448)
cung zad 'khrul par gyur na yang// nyes pa chen po bskyed mi nus//

chos kyi gnad rnams bcos gyur na// chos gzhan bzang yang 'tshang mi rgya// (449)

(4) The Fourth Occurrence (pp. 319.3.1-3 *na* 46)

Later, numerous erroneous doctrines have spread these days which contradict the doctrines of the Buddha, such as the blessing of Vajravārāhī,[342] the Dream-based tradition of engendering Bodhicitta,[343] etc., and such things as the sudden and instantaneous meditation of oneself as the tutelary deity and the Self-sufficient White [Remedy].

Even though the wise do not like these, through the power of the [present degenerate] times, they cannot stop them. It is true that ignorant people of little learning will practice so. But even those with pretensions to great learning are engaging in this, as in [the fable of] the hare's [baseless] report [which became uncritically accepted by others].[344]

Wise people should investigate and state whether or not this will harm the Buddha's doctrine if such sorts of things spread.

The Tibetan text, chapter III, 610-13:

phyi nas phag mo'i byin rlabs dang// sems bskyed rmi lam ma la sogs//

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[342] This was discussed above by Sa-paṇ in his DS, III 3ff = 18b.

[343] As noted in the dissertation of J. Rhoton (1985), introduction, this tradition was identified by Go-rams-pa (*sDom gsum rab dbye rnam bshad*, p. 153.2.) as that of the dge-bshes Phyag-sor-ba, who gave the Bodhisattva vows to all manner of disciples after having dreamt of Maitreya on a great throne imparting the vows to a large gathering.

[344] This refers to the fable of the foolish rabbit who panicked after hearing the loud splash (*chal*) of something falling into the water, and who ran away, heedlessly spreading the rumor that something terrible and sinister was afoot. It is more or less the same as the fable of the rabbit who cried out: "The sky is falling!" See also L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 454, n. 163. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 289a, uses the same image in a critical reply to Sa-paṇ (see L. Lhalungpa, p. 307).

yi dam bsgom pa dkrongs bskyed dang// dkar po chig thub la sogs pa// (610)

sangs rgyas bstan dang 'gal ba yi// chos log du ma deng sang 'phel//
mkhas rnams 'di la mi dgyes kyang// dus kyi shugs kyis bzlog ma nus// (611)

blun po sbyang pa chung ba rnams// 'di 'dra spyod pa bden mod kyi//
mkhas pa sbyangs par rlom pa yang// ri bong chal bzhin 'di la spyod// (612)

'di 'dra'i rigs can 'phel gyur na// sangs rgyas bstan la gnod mi gnod//
mkhas pa rnams kyis dpyod la smros//

(5) The Fifth Occurrence (pp. 320.1.5-320.2.1 [*na* 47a-b]):

In this way [just explained] one can maintain the Doctrine. You should know that if the opposite of that happens, it will harm the Doctrine. I, too, could gather a larger assembly than this if I taught the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] to those I had given the blessing-empowerment of Vajravārāhī, and [if I] then taught the meaning of "nothing to be achieved through effort" after identifying as the Path of Seeing some slight meditative experience arisen in them. The offerings of wealth, too, would increase. In the minds of ignorant people, too, there would arise admiration [for me] as if I were the Buddha.

The Tibetan text, chapter III, 638-40:

'di las bzlog pa byung gyur na// bstan la gnod par shes par gyis//
bdag kyang rdo rje phag mo yi// byin rlabs tsam re byas pa la// (638)

dkar po chig thub bstan nas kyang// myong ba cung zad skyes pa la//
mthong lam du ni ngo sprad nas// rtsol bsgrub med pa'i don bstan na// (639)

tshogs pa'ang 'di bas mang ba 'du// longs spyod 'bul ba'ang mang bar 'gyur//
blun po rnams kyi bsam pa la'ang// sangs rgyas lta bur mos pa skye// (640)

B. Sa-paṇ's Treatment of the *dKar po chig thub* in his *sKyes bu dam pa rnams la spring ba'i yi ge*

In this work, the expression *dkar po chig thub* occurs in a summary and further discussion of the bSam-yas debate, pp. 331.4.6-332.4.3 (*na* 72a-74a = 3a-5a). A part of this passage has already been presented above in chapter 4.

The Chinese master said: "[Regarding] the cause for birth within Cyclic Existence, [it is] the outcome of one's not recognizing one's own nature (*rang ngo rang gis ma shes pas*). If one recognizes one's own nature, one awakens into Buddhahood. Therefore, if one directly recognizes mind (*sems ngo 'phrod*), [that] is the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] (*dkar po chig thub*).[345] [3b]

[The Chinese monk] composed five treatises. In order to establish the basic doctrinal tradition of this [or: of his], saying "It is sufficient to rest if one has confronted and recognized mind," [he wrote] the *bSam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*. [To] reveal the main points of that, [he wrote] the *bSam gtan gyi lon*. To clarify [read: *gsal*?] its key points, [he wrote] the *bSam gtan gyi yang lon*. To establish through reasoning the practical instructions on that, [he wrote] the *lTa ba'i rgyab sha*. In order to establish it through scripture, [he wrote] the *mDo sde brgyad cu khungs*.[346]

And regarding the religion of his tradition, [he maintained that] there existed the two traditions of "Simultaneist" and "Gradualist," the so-called "descending from above" and "climbing from below."[347] "This [tradition] of ours is the simultaneous tradition that is similar to the eagle's descent from the sky," he said. Kamalaśīla refuted those [tenets], and having done so, he composed the great treatises such as the three Madhyamaka *Bhāvanākramas* and the *Madhyamakāloka*. Then the king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan had his [the Chinese master's] religious teachings concealed in

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[345] See L. van der Kuijp (1986), p. 148, and M. Broido (1987), p. 48.

[346] For some references to these works attributed to Mo-ho-yen, see D. Jackson (1987), p. 403, n. 104.

[347] Cf. L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 439, n. 19.

hidden caches, and ordered that henceforth in the Tibetan domain whoever practiced the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] would be punished. The historical accounts of these things can be seen to be in agreement [in the ancient records of] the *rGyal bzhed*, the *dPa' bzhed*, and the *'Bangs bzhed.*[348] I, too, set it forth following the Ācārya Kamalaśīla. I see that the intended sense of the Sūtras, Tantras and Śāstras is also this.

[From] the Self-sufficient White [Remedy], the [attainment of] omniscience regarding all objects of knowledge is impossible. I understand that omniscience is achieved through an understanding of emptiness that is skilled in various [compassionate] means through the tradition of either the Mantra or Perfections [vehicles].

As it is said in the *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (IX 12):

> And that illusion that arises from various conditions is various. Nowhere is it the case that a single condition is capable of all.

And as it is said many times in the *[Pramāṇa] Vārttika*, such as (II 136c-):

> From the becoming adept *(goms pa)*, over a long period, at many means in numerous ways, [4a] the faults and excellent qualities will become manifest.

And (II 132a):

> The Compassionate One, wishing to overcome suffering, applied himself to means. That goal [achieved through] means is 'hidden.' It is difficult to explain.

And [as stated in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra*]:[349]

> Just as the particular features of the knotting makes a cloth brightly colorful or not, so too the power of the motivating force makes the

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[348] On the *sBa bzhed* and the others, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), pp. 67ff and n. 136. Sa-paṇ's mention of these sources was noted by A. Vostrikov already in the 1930s. These sources were also cited by Sa-paṇ in his ThGS 50b. See also the references in D. Jackson (1987), p. 403, n. 104.

[349] MSA IX 35. Cf. Sa-paṇ, DS III 366-68 (34b-35a), where the same passage is quoted:

dgra bcom pa dang rang sangs rgyas // rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas rnam pa gsum //
rnam par grol bar mtshungs na yang (366)// bzang ngan thabs kyis phye ba yin //
de yang mdo sde rgyan las ni // ji ltar mdud pa'i bye brag gis //
gos la tshon bkra mi bkra ba (367) // de bzhin 'phen pa'i dbang gis ni //
grol ba'i ye shes bkra mi bkra // de skad gsungs pa'ang don 'di yin //

Gnosis of liberation brightly colorful or not.

And as it is said in the *Vairocanābhisambodhi Tantra*:[350]

The teaching [by the Buddha] of disciplines and Gnosis that possess no means was expounded by the Great Hero for the sake of introducing the Śrāvakas into that. Those who are the Buddhas of the past, present and future attained the unconditioned highest vehicle, having trained in that which possesses means and discriminative knowledge.

And likewise it is not taught in any Sūtra, Tantra or great treatise that one can awaken to Buddhahood by a Self-sufficient White [simple method], as distinct from [through] the perfectly replete possession of means and discriminative knowledge. It is indeed taught in [some] Sūtras and Tantras that one can gain Buddhahood by merely respectfully saluting or circumambulating, and by offering one flower, or by reciting a single ḍhāraṇī, or by reciting just the name of the Buddha, or by a single act of worshipful reverence, or by the arising of a single thought of Bodhicitta, or by the mere understanding of Emptiness. Yet one should understand those as being [statements with special] intention (*dgongs pa*) or allusion (*ldem dgongs*), but they are not direct expression. As Maitreyanātha said [in the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* I 20]:

If one understands the sense literally, one becomes haughty oneself and one's mind is destroyed.

For example, if the threads do not come together, the designs on the brocade will not appear. And if the seed, water and manure do not come together, [4b] the crop of a field will not appear. If all the interdependently connected [causes and conditions] do not come together, perfectly complete Buddhahood will not arise. Such is my understanding.

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350 Peking Tanjur *rgyud tha* 185b (p. 268.3.7):
gang dag 'das pa'i sangs rgyas dang// de bzhin gang dag ma byon dang//
gang yang da lta'i mgon po rnams// thabs dang shes rab ldan pa la//
bslabs nas bla med byang chub ni// 'dus ma byas pa des thob bo//
thabs dang mi ldan ye shes dang// bslabs pa dag kyang bshad pa ni//
dpa' bo chen po nyan thos rnams// de la gzung ba'i phyir bshad do//
Note that in Sa-paṇ's quotation, the order of the verses is reversed. The first three quarters have been condensed, and the wording differs slightly here and there, for instance reading *byang chub* instead of *theg pa*, *de* instead of *des*, *gsungs pa* instead of *bshad pa*, and *gzhug pa'i* instead of *gzung ba'i*. These differences do not materially affect the meaning, and may reflect an intermediate source or quotation from memory.

Generally speaking, one *does* require a direct recognition of the nature of mind. Nevertheless, this can be seen to be of two types: good and bad. If one directly recognizes the nature of mind having completed the excellent qualities through [compassionate] means, there will occur the attainment of Buddhahood. But without having completed the excellent qualities, no matter how excellent the direct recognition of mind is, it is taught that [in the best case a person can attain] the Arhatship of the Śrāvaka, in the middling case [he will be reborn in] the sphere lacking even fine substance (*arūpadhātu*), and in the worst case that one will be born in the evil destinies. A statement by Nāgārjuna, namely (MMK XXIV 11): "If they err in the viewing of emptiness, those of small intelligence will be destroyed," was also stated with this in mind.

Similarly, though ears of grain must come from a field, there are two ways for them to come: good and bad. If the ears appear on completely developed stalks, that will be a good harvest. If they appear on [plants that] have not reached full development, there will be a poor harvest. Likewise the direct recognition of the nature of mind, too, will be sufficient if it occurs at the right time. If it happens at the wrong time, it is of no use. With these things in mind, it was taught in the *Ākāśagarbha Sūtra* that to propound emptiness to those of untrained minds was a fundamental infraction, [teaching this] with the words: "And the proclaiming of emptiness to a living being who has not trained his mind...." If [thus to teach emptiness is a fundamental infraction], it goes without saying that [there would be an infraction] if it is understood. Also [that which was related] in the *Ratnakūṭa Sūtra*—how five hundred [monks] who would have attained Arhatship if Śāriputra had taught the Dharma were reborn as five hundred hell beings as a consequence of Mañjuśrī's teaching of the Dharma—was taught in order to refute the direct recognition of the nature of mind without the full development of the excellent qualities.

Therefore (?), regarding the teaching of the two—the Gradualist and the Simultaneist—in the Tantras, [some] say the following: "If, after gradually learning the vows such as of temporary ordination (*gnyen gnas*) and the theories of the Śrāvaka, Mind-Only and Madhyamaka, one then receives consecration and practices the two stages [of Tantric meditation], one is called a 'Gradualist.' Whereas one who in the very beginning [5a] received the Tantric empowerments and trains in the two stages is called a 'Simultaneist.'" But I have not seen in the Sūtras or Tantras the teaching of Gradualist and Simultaneist [approaches] of those sorts, such as are nowadays widely known.

Moreover, two ways of teaching can be seen: (1) a gradual application [of the student] afterwards to practice having first taught him the theory, and (2) a subsequent teaching of theory, [after having taught him the practice from the beginning]. Yet, while these two are dissimilar stages of the path according to the particular features of mind, I have never seen them explained as Gradualist and Simultaneist.

In general, our master, the great Lord of Dharma of Sa-skya [Grags-pa-rgyal-mtshan], has taught: "Whether one does teaching or practice, if it accords with the Word of the Buddha, it is the Buddha's Doctrine. If it does not accord, it will not be the Doctrine." This, my good sirs, is the significance also of our own energetically accomplishing [the teachings] in accord with his word. I request that you investigate whether this tradition is correct or incorrect.

The Tibetan text:

rgya nag mkhan po na re/ 'khor ba skye ba'i rgyu rang ngo rang gis ma shes pas lan/ rang ngo rang gis shes na 'tshang rgya/ de'i phyir sems ngo 'phrod na dkar po [72b] *tshig thub yin/ 'di yi gzhung 'dzugs pa la sems ngo 'phrod pa na nyal bas cho ga zer nas/ bsam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo/ de'i gnad ston pa bsam gtan gyi lon/ de'i gags sel ba la bsam gtan gyi yang lon/ de'i gdams ngag rigs pas sgrub pa la lta ba'i rgyab sha/ de lung gis sgrub pa la mdo sde brgyad cu khungs zhes bya ba bstan bcos lnga byas/ de'i lugs kyis chos la yang yas 'bab dang mas 'dzeg ces bya ba/ cig car ba dang/ rim gyis pa'i lugs gnyis yod pa las/ nged kyi 'di khyung nam mkha' las bab pa dang 'dra/ cig car ba yin zer ro//*

de dag slob dpon ka ma la shī las sun phyung nas/ dbu ma bsgom rim gsum dang/ dbu ma snang ba la sogs pa bstan bcos chen po mdzad do//

de nas rgyal po khri srong lde btsan gyis/ kho'i chos lugs rnams gter du sbas nas/ da slan chad bod kyi rgyal khams su dkar po chig thub cu byed la chad pa yod do zhes khrims bcas/ 'di dag gi lo rgyus rnams/ rgyal bzhed/ dpa' bzhed/ 'bangs bzhed rnams mthun par snang/ bdag gis kyang/ slob dpon ka ma la shī la'i rjes su 'brangs nas bshad/ mdo rgyud bstan bcos kyi dgongs pa'ang 'di yin par mthong/ dkar po chig thub la shes bya thams cad mkhyen pa mi srid/ gsang sngags sam pha rol tu phyin pa'i lugs kyis thabs sna tshogs la mkhas pa'i stong pa nyid go ba thams cad mkhyen pa nyid grub par go/ de'ang spyod 'jug las/

sna tshogs rkyen las byung ba yi// sgyu ma de yang sna tshogs nyid//
rkyen gcig gis ni kun nus pa// gang na yang ni yod ma yin//

zhes bya ba dang/ rnam 'grel las/

rnam pa du mar thabs [73a] *mang po// yun ring dus su goms pa las//*
de las skyon dang yon tan dag// rab tu gsal ba nyid du 'gyur//

zhes bya ba la sogs pa du ma dang/

brtse ldan sdug bsngal gzhom 'dod pas// thabs rnams la ni mngon sbyor mdzad//
thabs byung de ni lkog gyur pa// de 'chad pa ni dka' ba yin//

zhes gsungs pa dang/ [mdo sde rgyan las/]

ji ltar mdud pa'i bye brag gis// gos la tshon bkra mi bkra ba//
de bzhin 'phen pa'i dbang gis na// grol ba'i ye shes bkra mi bkra//

zhes bya ba dang/ rnam snang mngon byang las/

thabs dang mi ldan ye shes dang// bslab pa dag kyang gsungs pa ni//
dpa' po chen pos nyan thos rnams// de la gzhug pa'i phyir bshad do//
gang dag dus gsum sangs rgyas rnams// thabs dang shes rab ldan pa la//
bslabs nas bla med theg pa ni// 'dus ma byas pa de 'thob po//

zhes gsungs la/ de bzhin du mdo sde dang rgyud sde/ bstan bcos chen po thams cad las kyang/ thabs dang shes rab phun sum tshogs pa ma gtogs pa/ dkar po chig thub kyis 'tshang rgya bar ma gsungs/ mdo rgyud las phyag gam bskor ba tsam dang/ me tog re phul ba'am/ gzungs re bton pa'am/ sangs rgyas kyi mtshan tsam brjod pa'am/ mos gus re byas pa'am/ snying rje re skyes pa'am/ stong nyid go ba tsam gyis 'tshang rgya bar gsungs pa yod mod kyi/ de dag ni dgongs pa dang/ ldem dgongs su shes par bya'i/ sgra drang po ma yin te/ mgon po byams pas/

don sgra ji bzhin yongs rtogs na// bdag nyid bsnyems shing blo nyams 'gyur/

zhes gsungs pa ltar ro//

dper na rgyu spun ma 'tshogs na za 'og gi ri mo mi 'byung la/ sa bon dang chu lud ma 'tshogs na/ zhing gi ston thog mi 'byung/ rten 'brel thams cad ma 'tshogs na/ rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas mi 'byung bar go//

spyir sems ngo 'phrod pa dgos mod/ 'on kyang bzang ngag gnyis su snang/ thabs kyis yon tan rdzogs nas sems ngo 'phrod na 'tshang rgya bar 'gyur la/ thabs kyis yon tan ma rdzogs par sems ngo 'phrod pa la ji ltar bzang yang/ nyan thos kyi dgra bcom/ 'bring gzugs med kyi khams/ tha ma ngan song du skye bar gsungs/ slob dpon klu sgrub kyis/

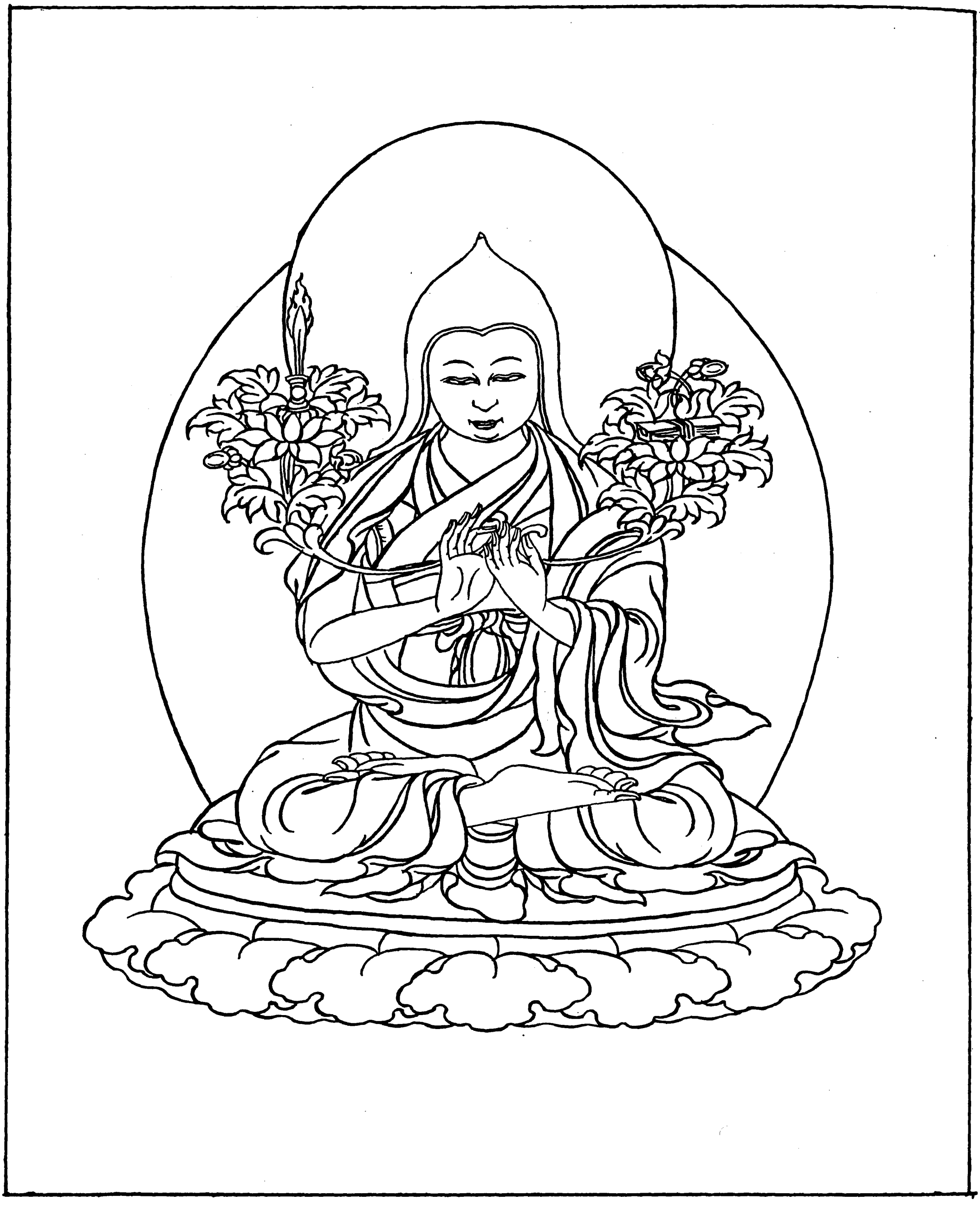
stong pa nyid la blta nyes na// shes rab chung rnams phung bar 'gyur//

zhes gsungs pa yang de la dgongs/ de bzhin du zhing las snye ma 'od dgos kyang/ 'ong lugs bzang ngag gnyis yod/ sdong bu rdzogs nas snye ma byung na lo legs 'byung/ ma rdzogs par snye ma byung na lo nyes 'gro/ de bzhin du sems ngo 'phrod pa'ang/ dus tshod la 'phrod pas chog/ dus ma yin par

'phrod pa la grogs med/ 'di dag la dgongs nas/ nam mkha'i snying po'i mdo las/

blo sbyang ma byas sems can la // stong pa nyid ni sgrogs pa dang // zhes blo ma sbyangs pa la stong pa nyid bshad pa la rtsa ltung 'byung na/ stong nyid go na smos ci dgos/ dkon mchog brtsegs pa las/ shā ri'i bus chos bshad na dgra bcom lnga brgyar 'gro ba zhig/ jam dpal gyis chos gsungs pas/ dmyal ba pa lnga brgyar skyes pa'ang/ yon tan ma rdzogs par sems ngo 'phrod pa dgag pa'i phyir gsungs pa yin/ des na rgyud las rim gyis pa dang/ cid car ba gnyis gsungs pa ni/ bsnyen gnas la sogs pa'i sdom pa dang/ nyan thos/ sems tsam/ dbu ma'i lta ba la rim gyis sbyangs nas/ phyis dbang bskur bya ste/ lam rim gnyis la slob na/ rim gyis pa zhes bya la/ dang po [74a] *nyid du gsang sngags kyi dbang bskur te/ rim pa gnyis la slob pa la cig car ba zhes zer te/ deng sang grags pa'i rim gyis pa dang/ cig car pa de lta bu mdo rgyud nas gsungs pa ma mthong/ yang dang po lta ba bstan nas/ phyis spyod pa la rim gyis sbyor ba/ dang po spyod pa la rim gyis sbyangs nas/ phyis lta ba ston pa'i bkri lugs gnyis snang ste/ 'di gnyis blo'i bye brag gis lam rim mi 'dra ba yin gyis/ 'di dag la rim gyis pa dang/ cig car ba bshad pa ma mthong/ spyir nged kyi bla ma chos rjes skya pa chen po'i zhal nas/ bshad pa dang lag len gang byed kyang/ sangs rgyas kyi gsung dang mthun na sangs rgyas bstan pa yin/ mi mthun na bstan par mi 'gyur zhes gsungs/ nged kyis kyang de'i gsung bzhin 'bad nas bsgrub pa'i don lags/ lugs 'di 'thad mi 'thad rnam par dpyad par zhu//*





5. Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga'-rgyal-mtshan

C. Sa-paṇ's Refutation of Earlier and Later *dKar-po-chig-thub* Doctrines in the *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*

The following discussion is found in the *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*, pp. 24.4.3-26.1.4 (*tha* 48b-51a):[351]

(1) Account of the bSam-yas Debate

The refutation of a previously appeared Chinese tradition. In the time of the king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, there was a Chinese monk who taught the following: "Words have no real pith. By means of a dharma of conventional usage [expressible through words and including conventional practices] one will not gain Buddhahood. If one understands the mind, that is the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] (*dkar po chig thub*). Having composed treatises entitled *bSam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo*, *bSam gtan gyi lon*, *[bSam gtan gyi] yang lon*, *lTa ba'i rgyab sha*, and *mDo sde brgyad cu khungs*, he spread throughout the realm of Tibet this doctrine of the Self-sufficient White [Remedy].

Then, because that doctrine did not accord with the [Buddhist] religious tradition of India, [49a] the king invited dBa' Ye-shes-dbang-po [to court] and asked him which religious tradition was true, that of India or of China. Ye-shes-dbang-po told the king:

> Ācārya Śāntarakṣita stated this in the testament that he left behind: "The heterodox [non-Buddhist] religion will not arise [in Tibet] because the Ācārya Padmasambhava has entrusted the Tibetan realm to the twelve guardian deities (*brtan ma*). But it is the "greatness" [i.e. essence] of dependent origination that things appear in pairs—day and night, right and left, waxing and waning [of the moon], and [even] pure and impure [Buddhist] religion. Consequently, after I have died, there will appear a Chinese master. And there will appear [his] doctrine, a denigration of means and discriminative understanding called the Self-sufficient White [Remedy], which will teach that one gains Buddhahood through merely the understanding of mind. Since the Lord Buddha taught in a Sūtra that one of the five impurities, the impurity of view, is the delighting in emptiness, it is the nature of

[351] Cf. Roger Jackson (1982), pp. 91-93.

things that not only [some people] in Tibet, but all individuals in whom the five impurities thrive, delight in that. If this spreads, it will harm the doctrine of the Buddha in general. Therefore, at that time, you should invite from India my disciple the great scholar named Kamalaśīla and have him debate with the Chinese master. Then let the tradition of whoever wins be followed!"

Since [Śāntarakṣita] foretold this, I beg you [O king] to act accordingly.

[The king] then invited Ācārya Kamalaśīla and [convened a meeting]. At bSam-yas the king and the learned men acted as witnessing arbiters, and collected all weapons. When garlands of flowers had been placed in their hands, the disputants vowed to bow [in respectful submission] to the victor and to discard the defeated tradition. They also assented that whoever did otherwise should be punished by the king.

At that time, in the row of Kamalaśīla, there were only several adherents of the Indian religious tradition and a very few others such as the minister 'Gos. [49b] In the row of the Chinese preceptor, there was assembled a very large group that included the royal consort of the 'Bro clan named Byang-chub and the chamberlain (*gzim mal ba*) gCo-rma-rma.

At that time, the Ācārya Kamalaśīla elicited his opponent's position by asking: "What is the religious tradition of China like?" The Chinese master then replied: "Your religious tradition, which begins with taking refuge and generating a resolve to attain Awakening, climbs from the bottom up, like a monkey climbing to the top of a tree. This religious tradition of ours consists of attaining Buddhahood through merely understanding the mind, having cultivated in meditation the absence of conceptual thinking, because one cannot attain Buddhahood through a Dharma that consists of accomplishing actions [e.g. religious duties]. Our tradition is called the Self-sufficient White [Remedy], because it is a religious teaching that descends from above, like an eagle descending out of the sky onto the top of a tree."

To that Kamalaśīla replied: "Both your analogy and your meaning are unacceptable. Of these two, first of all your analogy is unacceptable. Does that eagle descend from the sky to the top of a tree after having taken birth suddenly with completely developed wings? Or does he descend having first been born somewhere [on the ground] such as on a crag and then having developed wings? The first [alternative] is impossible. And the second is suitable as an analogy for the gradual

approach, but it is not suitable as an analogy for the simultaneous approach."

Then, when the Chinese preceptor had no reply regarding his analogy, the Ācārya Kamalaśīla said: "Not only is your analogy wrong, but your meaning is also mistaken. What is that meditative cultivation of non-conceptualization? Is it merely the stopping of one part of conceptual thought, or does one have to stop conceptual thinking in its entirety? If you say it is the stopping of one part, then the consequence would be that such things as sleep and fainting would also be 'non-conceptualizing,' because they possess a mere stopping of one part of thought. If you say it is the stopping of conceptualizing thought in its entirety, in that case [I must ask:] When you meditatively cultivate non-conceptualizing, do you or do you not need to formulate beforehand the thought, 'I will cultivate non-conceptualizing'? If you do not need to, [50a] then that meditative cultivation would arise in all sentient beings of the three realms of existence *(dhātus)*, for meditation would be born even though a thought of meditating had not been formulated beforehand.

"If you do need to formulate beforehand the thought of cultivating non-conceptually, since that is itself conceptual thinking, your assertion of meditatively cultivating non-conceptualization is ruined. Just as, for example, one's observance of silence is broken if one says, 'Don't make any noise!'"

Thus, with such words as these, Kamalaśīla refuted [that doctrine] by means of scripture and reasoning. Thereupon the Chinese master lost the capacity to respond. At that, the king said: "If you have an answer, then please give it." The master responded: "I am as if struck on the head by lightning; I know no answer." The king said: "In that case, offer the garland of flowers to the Ācārya and beg his pardon. Abandon the religious tradition of the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] and practice according to the religious tradition of India that does not conflict with either scripture or reasoning." [The king] promulgate throughout Tibet the edict: "Henceforth whoever follows the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] will be punished." And the Chinese texts were gathered together and hidden in a cache at bSam-yas.

Thereupon the Chinese master felt distraught and returned to his residence. It is said that when going he accidentally left behind at the religious school one of his shoes, and that on the basis of that sign he prophesied to his followers: "When the doctrine of the Buddha is about

to perish, there will yet remain a little of my doctrine—as much as a shoe."[352] Afterwards learned religious teachers of Tibet said: "Though the Chinese master did not understand religious doctrine, he did know a bit about prognostication, for that [leaving behind of his shoe] is the reason why nowadays people are discarding genuine religious traditions and are going over to the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] that holds that one attains Buddhahood by the direct recognition of mind." [50b]

I have also seen written in another testament (*bka' chems*) an account that a Chinese monk other than that preceptor left his shoe behind when despondently leaving for China, and that the above [prediction] was said about *his* shoe being left behind.

Then the Chinese master lit a fire on top his head and facing toward Sukhāvatī in the west, he passed away. gCo-rma-rma the chamberlain committed suicide by beating his sexual organ, and so on and so forth. Here I have not set down the rest of the story because this book will become too long. But one should read about it in the *rGyal bzhed*, *dPa' bzhed* and *'Ba' bzhed* histories.[353]

(2) Refutation of A Present-day Great Seal Linked with that Tradition

The Refutation of the Tradition of Recent Generations [which Follows That]. Nowadays there are some people [who teach the following] instructions on the Great Seal:[354]

> Avoiding the three delaying diversions (*gol sa*) and the four occasions of lapsing (*shor sa*), one should cultivate the innate [mind], letting it be original, unaltered and relaxed, like the spinning of a Brahmin's [sacred] thread.

They say the sense of that is: Meditational cultivation of the Great Seal can become delayingly diverted in pleasure, luminosity or non-conceptualization. If one becomes delayingly diverted in pleasure, one

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352 On the motif of the shoe or boot left behind, see D. Seyfort Ruegg (1989), p. 13, n. 16.

353 These sources were also quoted in the *sKyes bu dam pa* 3b. For more references, see above, note 348.

354 This is attributed by bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal (263a) to rje Phag-mo-gru-pa. See also L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 278.

will be reborn a god of the sphere of desire (*kāmadhātu*). If one becomes delayingly diverted in luminosity (*gsal ba*), one will [be reborn as a god] in the sphere of "fine material" (*rūpadhātu*). And if one becomes delayingly diverted in non-conceptualization, one will be born in the sphere lacking even fine material (*arūpadhātu*).

The four occasions for lapsing are (a) lapsing into [erroneous conceptions of] the original nature [of the ultimate] (*gshis la shor*), (b) lapsing into [erroneous] meditative cultivation (*bsgom du shor*), (c) lapsing into [erroneous conceptions of the] path (*lam du shor*), and (d) lapsing into [erroneous] "sealing" (*rgyas 'debs su shor*). Avoiding these, one should place the mind in the "original" (*so ma*), "unaltered" (*ma bcos*), "relaxed" (*lhugs pa*), "softly at ease" (*'bol le*), and "loosened" (?) (*shig ge*) state, like the spinning of a Brahmin's sacred thread.

This [teaching] follows the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] of China, but it is not the Great Seal taught by the Buddha. Moreover, the Great Seal in general was not explained in the Sūtra, Vinaya or Abhidharma scriptures. In particular, I have never seen in those the teaching of a Great Seal (Skt. *mahāmudrā*) such as this. In the four divisions of the Tantras, there are explained [the four *mudrās*] as in the passage: "*karma, dharma, samaya* and *Mahāmudrā*."[355] But the above is not the system of those four. In the *Caturmudrāniścaya* of Ārya Nāgārjuna it is said:[356]

> If those who do not understand the *karmamudrā* will not understand the *dharmamudrā*, [51a] how will they understand even the name of *Mahāmudrā*?

Likewise, that sort of the Great Seal is refuted in the Tantras and [tantric] treatises, though here I have not written down the [relevant] quotations from scripture because they belong to the Mantra tradition.

[Question:] Even though this [Great Seal] may not be explained in the Sūtras, Tantras and treatises, is there any contradiction in practicing them? [Answer:] The above [teaching] contradicts the Sūtras and Tantras, and it is clearly unacceptable from the point of view of reasoning [when one analyzes it]. The reason is that it is a greater delaying diversion to be

[355] bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal, f. 89a, refers to these four as appearing in Nāropa's commentary on the Hevajra Tantra and in Maitrīpāda's (*sic*) *Caturmudrāniścaya*. See also L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 100.

[356] The similar quotation found in the *Phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa* (P. 3069) appears in the translated section of the *sDom gsum rab dbye*, part 2.A.1 (DS III 177-8). See above, note 337.

born as a god with no freedom to practice religion than to be born as one of the gods of the three [above-mentioned] delaying diversions, since all Sūtras and Tantras contain the prayer: "May I not be born in the eight circumstances that lack the freedom to practice religion!" Another reason is that some methods of [meditation through] letting one's mind remain in an unaltered state are explained as the "meditative cultivation of delusion" (*rmongs pa'i sgom pa*), being mentioned with the words:

> One who meditatively cultivate [unconscious, unaware] delusion will attain delusion through delusion.

And another reason is that it has not even the slightest difference from the Self-sufficient White [Remedy] of the Chinese master.

Furthermore, for the attainment of Buddhahood, even worse than the eight circumstances lacking the freedom to practice religion are the delaying diversions of the Śrāvaka and Pratyekabuddha. .... [Several lengthy quotations follow, here omitted.]

The Tibetan text:

gsum pa nyan thos dang theg chen gnyis ka ma yin pa sangs rgyas kyi bstan par 'dod pa dgag pa la bzhi ste/ sngon byung ba rgya nag gi lugs dang/ de'i rjes su 'brang ba phyi rabs pa'i lugs dang/ deng sang grags pa sems tsam rnam med kyi sgom la phyag rgya chen por 'dod pa'i lugs dang/ shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa ltar snang phyag rgya chen por 'dod pa dgag pa'o//

dang po ni rgyal po khri srong lde btsan gyi dus su rgya nag gi dge longs na re/ tshig la snying po med tha snyad kyi chos kyis 'tshang mi rgya sems rtogs na dkar po chig thub yin zer/ de'i bstan bcos bsam gtan nyal ba'i 'khor lo/ bsam gtan gyi lon/ yang lon/ lta ba'i rgyab sha/ mdo sde brgyad cu khungs zhes bya ba brtsams nas/ dkar po chig thub 'di bod khams thams cad du 'phel lo//

der rgya gar gyi chos lugs dang ma mthun nas dpa' ye [49a] *shes dbang po rgyal pos spyan drangs rgya gar rgya nag gi chos lugs gang bden dris pas/ ye shes dbang po'i zhal nas slob dpon zhi ba mtshos zhal chems 'di ltar bzhag ste/ bod khams 'di slob dpon padma 'byung gnas kyis brtan ma bcu gnyis la gtad pas mu stegs ni mi 'byung/ 'on kyang nyin mtshan dang g.yas g.yon dang yar ngo mar ngo dang chos dag ma dag gnyis gnyis 'byung ba rten 'grel gyi che ba yin pas/ da 'das pas 'og tu rgya nag gi mkhan po zhig 'byung des thabs dang shes rab la skur ba 'debs pa dkar po chig thub ces bya ba sems rtogs pa 'ba' zhig gis 'tshang rgya'o zhes zer ba gcig 'byung bar 'gyur/*

de bcom ldan 'das kyis mdo las/ snyigs ma lnga'i nang na lta ba'i snyigs ma zhes bya ba stong pa nyid la dga' ba yin par gsungs pas bod kho nar ma zad snyigs ma lnga bdo ba'i gang zag thams cad de la dga' ba chos nyid yin/ 'di 'phel na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa spyi la gnod pas/ de'i tshe nga'i slob ma ka ma la shī la zhes bya ba'i mkhas pa chen po de rgya gar nas spyan drongs la rgya nag mkhan po dang rtsod du chug gang rgyal ba de'i lugs gyis shig ces lung bstan pas de ltar mdzad 'tshal/ zhes zhus nas slob dpon ka ma la shī la spyan drangs/ bsam yas su rgyal po dang mkhas pa rnams kyis dbang po byas nas thams cad kyi mtshon cha rnams bsdus/ lag tu me tog gi phreng ba gtad nas/ gang rgyal ba la btud de pham pa'i lugs por/ de ltar mi byed ba rnams la rgyal pos chad pas gcod par dam bcas pa'i tshe/ ka ma la shī la'i gral du rgya gar gyi chos lugs 'dzin pa 'ga' dang blon po 'gos [49b] *la sogs pa nyung? zad cig las ma byung/ rgya nag mkhan po'i gral du rgyal po'i btsun mo 'bro za byang chub dang gzi*[m] *dmal ba gco rma rma la sogs pa tshogs pa shin tu che bar 'dus so//*

de'i tshe slob dpon ka ma la shī las/ rgya nag gi chos lugs ji ltar zhes phyogs snga dris pa na/ rgya nag na re/ khyed kyi chos lugs skyabs 'gro dang sems bskyed nas bzung nas spre'u shing rtser 'dzeg pa ltar mas 'dzeg yin/ nged kyi chos lugs 'di bya byed kyi chos kyis 'tshang mi rgya bas rnam par mi rtog pa bsgoms nas sems rtogs pa nyid kyis 'tshang rgya ste/ khyung nam mkha' las shing rtser 'bab pa ltar yas 'bab kyi chos yin pas dkar po chig thub yin no zhes zer ro//

de la slob dpon gyis dpe don gnyis ka mi 'thad pa las thog mar dpe mi 'thad de/ khyung nam mkha' las glo bur du 'dab gshog rdzogs par skyes nas shing rtser 'bab bam/ brag la sogs par skyes nas rim gyis 'dab gshog rdzogs par byas te 'bab/ dang po ni mi srid la/ gnyis pa ni rim gyis pa'i dper rung gi cig car ba'i dper mi rung ngo//

de nas mkhan pos dpe la lan ma thebs pa dang/ der slob dpon gyis khyod kyi dpe nor bar ma zad don yang 'khrul te/ rnam par mi rtog pa'i sgom de ci rnam rtog phyogs gcig bkag pa tsam yin nam/ rnam rtog mtha' dag dgag dgos/ phyogs gcig bkag pa yin no zhe na/ de ltar na gnyid dang brgyal ba la sogs pa yang rnam par mi rtog par thal/ rtog pa phyogs gcig bkag pa tsam yod pa'i phyir ro//

rnam par rtog pa mtha' dag bkag pa yin no zhe na/ de ltar khyod mi rtog pa sgom pa'i tshe mi rtog pa bsgom snyam pa'i rtog pa sngon du gtong dgos sam mi dgos/ mi dgos na khams gsum gyi sems can thams [50a] *cad la'ang sgom skye bar thal te/ bsgom snyam pa'i rtog pa sngon du ma btang yang sgom skye ba'i phyir ro// mi rtog pa sgom snyam pa'i rtog pa sngon du gtong dgos na de nyid rtog pa yin pas mi rtog pa bsgom pa'i dam bca' nyams*

te/ dper na smra bcad byas pa yin no zhes brjod na smra bcad shor ba'am/ ca co ma byed ca cor 'gro ba bzhin no// zhes bya ba la sogs pa lung dang rigs pas sun phyung ba dang/ rgya nag mkhan pa spobs pa med par gyur te/ der rgyal pos smras pa/ lan yod na gsungs shig/ mkhan pos smra ba/ mgor thog brgyab pa dang mtshungs pas lan mi shes so//

rgyal pos smra ba/ de ltar na slob dpon na la me tog phreng ba phul la bzod par gsol te/ dkar po chig thub kyi chos lugs bor la lung rigs dang mi 'gal ba rgya gar gyi chos lugs bzhin du gyis shig/ da slan chad dkar po chig thub 'di sus byed kyang chad pa gcod do// zhes bod khams kun tu khrims bcas te/ rgya nag gi dpe rnams bsdus nas bsam yas su gter du sbas so//

der rgya nag mkhan po yi mug ste rang gi gnas su song/ chos grwa der lham las pas ltas de la dpags na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa 'jig khar nga'i bstan pa lham tsam las par 'gyur ro// zhes 'khor rnams la lung bstan no zhes grag go//

phyis dge ba'i bshes gnyen mkhas pa rnams na re/ rgya nag mkhan pos chos mi shes kyang ltas cung zad shes pa zhig ste deng song chos khungs ma rnams bor te sems ngo 'phrod pas sangs rgya bar 'dod pa dkar po chig thub du 'gro pa'i rgyu mtshan de yin gsung/ bka' chems kyi yi ge gzhan zhig las ni mkhan po ma yin pa'i ha shang gzhan zhig yi chad de rgya nag tu 'gro ba'i tshe lham las [50b] *pa la dpags nas de skad zer zhes yi ger bris pa'ang mthong ngo//*

der rgya nag mkhan po mgo la me sbar te nub phyogs bde ba can du kha bltas te 'das/ gzi dmal ba gco rma rma rang gi dbang po brdungs nas lcebs zhes bya ba la sogs pa 'dir yi ge mangs pas ma bris te/ rgyal bzhed dpa' bzhed 'ba' bzhed rnams su blta bar bya'o//

gnyis pa phyi rabs pa'i lugs dgag pa ni/ deng sang 'ga' zhig phyag rgya chen po'i gdams dag/

gol sa gsum dang shor sa bzhi// spangs te mnyug ma bsgom par bya//
bram ze skud pa 'khal ba ltar// so ma ma bcos lhug par bzhag//

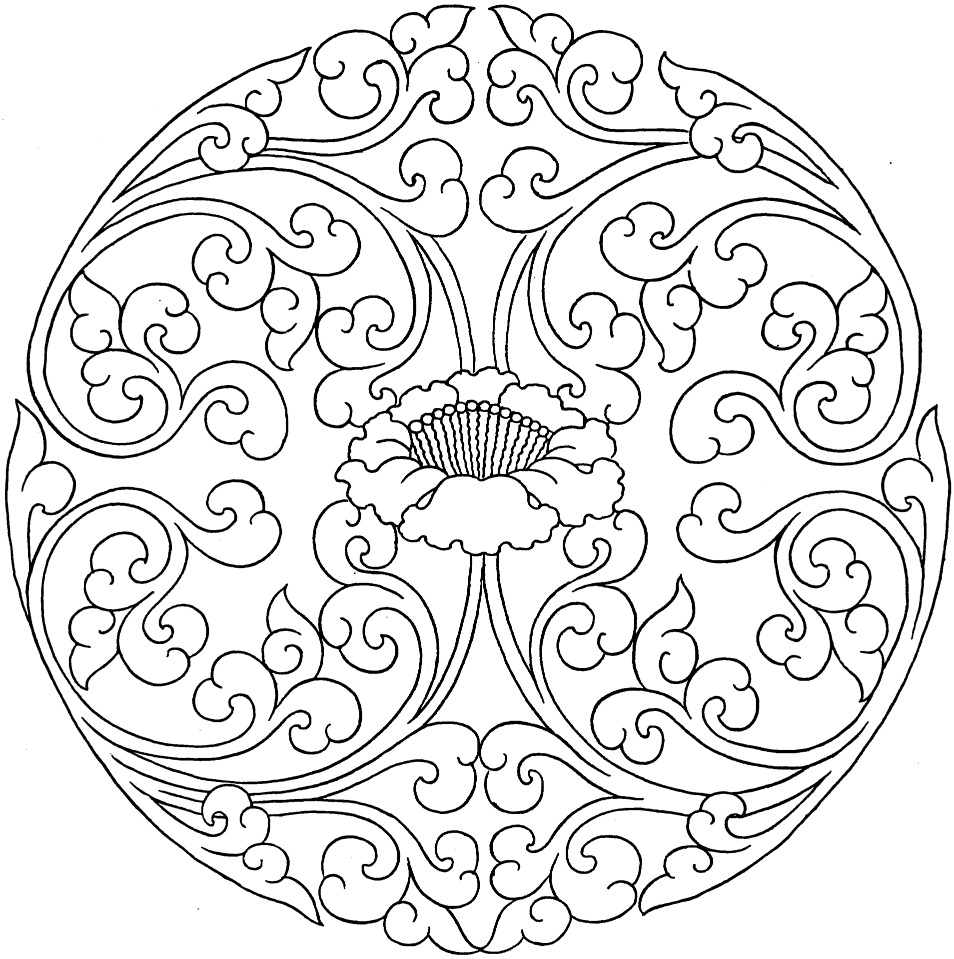
ces bya ba'i don phyag rgya chen po bde gsal mi rtog pa la gol ba ste/ de yang bde ba la gol na/ 'dod khams kyi ltar skye/ gsal ba la gol na/ gzugs khams/ mi rtog pa la gol na gzugs med du skye ba/ shor sa bzhi ni phyag rgya chen po gshis la shor ba/ bsgom du shor ba/ lam du shor ba/ rgyas 'debs su shor ba'o// de dag spangs te bram ze skud pa 'khal ba ltar/ so ma dang/ ma bcos pa dang/ lhug pa dang/ 'bol le/ shig ge 'jog pa yin no zhes zer ro//

'di rgya nag gi dkar po chig thub kyi rjes su 'brang ba yin gyi sangs rgyas kyi gsungs pa'i phyag rgya chen po ma yin te/ de'ang mdo sde dang/ 'du la ba/ mngon pa gsum nas spyir phyag rgya chen po bshad pa med/ bye brag

tu 'di 'dra'i phyag rgya chen po bshad pa ma mthong/ rgyud sde bzhi nas/ las dang chos dang dam tshig dang/ phyag rgya chen po zhes bshad pa yod de/ de dag gi lugs kyang 'di ma yin te/ slob dpon klu sgrub kyi phyag rgya bzhi par/ las gyi phyag rgya mi shes pa de dag gis ni chos kyi phyag rgya'ang shes par mi 'gyur na/ [51a] *phyag rgya chen po'i ming tsam yang shes par ga la 'gyur zhes gsungs la/ de bzhin du rgyud sde rnams dang/ bstan bcos rnams las de lta bu'i phyag rgya chen po bkag ste/ lung rnams ni gsang sngags yin pas 'dir ma bris so//*

gal te mdo rgyud bstan bcos nas ma bshad kyang nyams su blangs pa la 'gal ba cang yod dam snyam na/ 'di mdo rgyud dang 'gal zhing rigs pas mi 'thad par mngon te/ de'i rgyu mtshan gol sa gsum gyi lhar skye ba pas/ mi khom pa'i lhar skyes pa gol sa che ste/ mi khom pa'i gnas brgyad du skye bar ma gyur cig ces mdo rgyud kun las smon lam btab pa dang/

rmongs pa'i sgom pa gang yin pa// rmongs pas rmongs pa 'thob par 'gyur// zhes blo ma bcos pa'i dang las 'jog pa'i tshul 'ga' zhig rmongs pa'i sgom par bshad pa'i phyir dang/ rgya nag mkhan po'i dkar po chig thub dang khyad par cung zad med pa'i phyir ro// yang 'tshang rgya ba la mi khom pa'i gnas brgyad pas kyang nyan thos dang rang sangs rgyas gol sa che ste/



D. Criticisms of the dKar-po-chig-thub or Great Seal in Sa-paṇ's *Phyogs bcu'i sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems pa thams cad la phul ba'i yi ge*

In this work, the criticisms of the *dkar po chig thub* is found on pp. 326.2.3-326.3.2 (*na* 60b.3-61a.2 = 6b-7a):

[O Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,] in Your scriptures it is taught that the cultivation of the Great Seal is a Gnosis arisen from consecration and a special meditative absorption (*samādhi*) of the two stages [of tantric meditation]. Some people, regarding the Self-sufficient White [Remedy], introduce [it] as the Great Seal. [They teach the following] and term it "Great Seal":

> Having avoided the four occasions of lapsing and the three delaying diversions, one ought meditatively to cultivate the primordial mind (*mnyug ma*).
> Like spinning a Brahmin thread, one should leave it in the original, unaltered, relaxed [state]."

When I examine the sense [of] this, I see the following: If one leaves it in its original state, it is just [fibres of] wool. If one makes it into a thread, it is altered. Therefore there exists here a fault in the analogy.[357]

Moreover, I see the faults of meaning, as follows: If one attained the Great Seal merely by avoiding the three delaying diversions, the Śrāvaka cessation, too, would be that.[358] The thought, "I will avoid the four occasions for lapsing," is not the Great Seal. [But] without [that] thought, one is unable to avoid them. If one could avoid them even in the absence of [that] thought, why would the Great Seal not arise effortlessly for all sentient beings? Therefore if it is the Great Seal itself, it is without delaying diversions and occasions for lapsing. If it has them, it is not the Great Seal.[359] [61a= 7a]

Therefore [You, O Buddhas and Bodhisattvas,] have not taught a Great Seal of such a religious tradition.

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[357] Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal 263b; L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 278.

[358] Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal 292b; L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 310.

[359] Cf. bKra-shis-rnam-rgyal 280b; L. Lhalungpa (1986), p. 298.

Consequently [I] do not maintain that Great Seal which was not taught in the Tantras. When I announce that publicly, those who do not know the Tantras become angry.

Who is right, those angry ones or I? O Conquerors and Sons, I pray that you consider [this].

The Tibetan text:

phyag rgya chen po bsgom pa yang// dbang las byung ba'i ye shes dang//
rim gnyis ting 'dzin khyad par can// yin zhes khyed kyi gsung las 'byung//

kha cig dkar po tshig thub la// phyag rgya chen por ngo sprod byed//
shor sa bzhi dang gol sa gsum// spangs la gnyug ma bsgom par bya//

bram ze skud pa 'khal ba ltar// so ma ma bcos lhug par gzhag//
'di la phyag rgya chen po zer// 'di don brtags na 'di ltar mthong//

so mar bzhag na bal nyid yin// skud par byas na bcos par 'gyur//
de phyir 'di la dpe skyon yod// don gyi skyon yang 'di ltar mthong//

gol sa gsum po bcad tsam gyis// phyag rgya chen po 'gyur na ni//
nyan thos 'gog pa'ang der 'gyur ro// shor sa bzhi po spang snyam pa'i//

rnam rtog phyag rgya chen po min// rtog pa med na spong mi nus//
rtog pa med kyang spong nus na// sems can kun la 'bad med par//

phyag rgya chen po cis mi skye// des na phyag rgya chen po nyid//
yin na shor sa gol sa med// yod na phyag rgya chen po [61a] *min//*

de phyir 'di 'dra'i chos lugs kyi// phyag rgya chen po gsungs pa med//
des na rgyud nas ma gsungs pa'i// phyag rgya chen po de mi 'dod//

de skad bdag gis bsgrags pa la// rgyud sde mi shes pa rnams khro//
khro ba de dang bdag gang bden//

ABBREVIATIONS

BCA	=	Śāntideva, *Bodhicāryāvatāra*
D	=	Derge edition
DS	=	Sa-paṇ, *sDom gsum rab dbye*
KhJ	=	Sa-paṇ, *mKhas 'jug*
MMK	=	Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikās*
MSA	=	Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra
P	=	Peking edition
PV	=	Dharmakīrti, *Pramāṇavārttika*
RGV	=	Ratnagotravibhāga
ThGS	=	Sa-paṇ, *Thub pa'i dgongs gsal*

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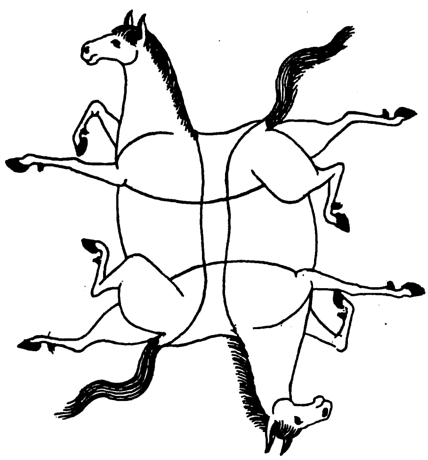
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